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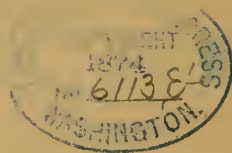


MARY'S VISION.

A

POEM.

By James M. West.



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P R E F A C E .



“So, ’t was an idle dream”—well, dreams have been
A power that shaped the destinies of men.

A Pharaoh dreamed, a captive Hebrew heard,
That skilled in dreams, interpreted the word,
And stores of corn in Egypt’s garner’s grew,
That plenty’s hand to suppliant famine threw;
And Judah lived, and Judah’s line gave birth
To Him whose kingdom fills the heavens and earth.

A sightless beggar dreamed of Helen’s charms
And Illion’s fall; and skilled in arts and arms,
A State grew up, whose influence will expire
When the last mortal sees a world on fire.

When idle visions of a midnight hour,
Saved the Redeemer from a tyrant’s power;
A long predicted empire sprung to view,
And hoary time began to count anew
Creation’s annals, from a kingdom’s rise,
Whose grand emporium is in the skies;
Its borders unexplored—and none will write,
(No future Gibbon,) “Here, it reached its height:

And here, amidst convulsions that appall,
Began its ultimate 'Decline and Fall.' "

The pictured scroll of Heaven ; star-spangled o'er,
Where comets wander wide, and find no shore ;
The etherial depths that mocks the wildered eye,
Sprung from a reverie of the Most High.

Oceans and mountains ; woods and flowery sod,
Spangled with jewels, is a dream of God.

Ethereal as mists, the sport of storms,
Yet oft hath visions petrified to forms
Lasting as rocks—deep-seated as the hills ;
That poet's page, and history's record fills.

MARY'S VISION.

BOOK I.

THE VIGIL.

I.

I would the weary night were o'er ;
I'm sick of watching on the floor
The pallid moonlight stealing slow,
And sick of glancing to and fro,
With sudden, superstitious dread,
As if there glided round my bed
Some presence strange, whose step of fear,
And rustling garments, scared mine ear.

II.

I'll rise up, since I may not sleep,
And by my lattice muse and weep,
'Till languor chases from my breast,
These thoughts that will not let me rest.

III.

Yes, then the heavens wore such an hue,
Such light clouds floated o'er the blue ;

And the full moon did wear, as now,
Such dazzling brightness on her brow,
And threw her radiance far and wide,
That night when sister Ellen died.

Just as I see it now—that night
Yon tall ash lifted to the light,
Such mosses grey, as if it held
Locks rudely plucked from wrinkled eld.

IV.

So from its distant mountain source,
The brook betrayed its straggling course,
Through groves of alders—rushes green,
Or glanced from drooping willow's sheen,
With hasty skirl, or sluggish flow,
Adown the valley leagues below.

V.

A thousand misty jets, like smoke,
From out the swampy forest broke,
That curling upward slow, did change
To shapes fantastic, wild and strange;
"Souls disembodied," fancy said;
"The ghosts of matter, whilom dead;
Of withered flowers, of leaves and logs,
That lie festering in the bogs.

VI.

And round its border, closely pent
With vines and branches, laced and blent,
All, all around that leafy screen,
The fire-flies' torches flashed between.

VII.

Its dim recesses, spangling o'er
The girdle, lonely darkness wore.

And up the meadow, wet with dew,
Where tree or shrub its shadow threw ;
Those little link-boys, nursed in damps,
Sprang up and lit their tiny lamps.

VIII.

I shall remember till I die,
How looked that night, the earth and sky,
For when I left the room of death
A moment brief, to take my breath ;
The glories of the pictured scroll,
Burst overwhelming on my soul ;
As charnels' deepest gloom might seem
Contrasted with a fairy dream :
And thus I spake, "'Tis wonder great,
That Nature wears her robes of state,
At such a time, and all unmeet
Is her demeanor calmly sweet,
When death has come to break love's spell,
And white lips breathe a last 'farewell.' "

IX.

Recumbent on her dying bed,
With fathers' arm beneath her head ;
And breathing hurriedly she lay,
While mother wiped the drops away.

Unearthly brilliant were her eyes,
As stars that stud the wintry skies ;

And on our faces round were cast,
From one to other glancing fast,
With gaze intense, as if to trace
The lineaments of each dear face ;
That she might sketch (in lonely hour,)
Our features, far in heavenly bower.

X.

O many a parting hath there been,
Since evil cursed the homes of men ;
But few so desolate and drear,
As when we felt that death was near ;
And stood among our group distressed,
The dark-browed angel, fearful guest.

Poor father seemed by hope forsook,
And John, O how his strong frame shook !

XI.

So slow she died, we thought belike
The king of terrors fears to strike ;
Appalled by presence stern and high,
Who scares him with rebuking eye,
For then, when all were deeply stirred,
And nought but choking sobs were heard,
And we with sorrow almost wild,
She whispered "Jesus" twice, and smiled.

XII.

Then came the morn ; 't was not for her
But rife with all the sick'ning stir
Of preparation : then again,
Another night of sleepless pain ;

The gathering for the preached word,
Where once her tuneful voice was heard,
So clear and musical, each note
Would long in soft vibrations float,
As if the vaulted roof on high,
Refused to let the cadence die ;
And aged men would turn and smile,
And aged mothers glance the while,
To our sweet singer in the choir,
Whose lips seemed touched with hallowed fire.

XIII.

Alas ! we all remembered well,
(When last she sung) how rose and fell,
Low sinking, swelling, lingering long,
Those words of Zion's loftiest song,
"O when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend?"

XIV.

And when they passed with measured tread
Around the aisles to view the dead,
It seemed, as two by two they crossed,
That every home a friend had lost.

XV.

And when the minister came slow,
And bent above with locks of snow,
He who had taught submission still,
And urged it as "our Father's will
That Ellen, in a grander choir
Should sing, and thrill assemblies higher ;"

Himself from grief could not refrain,
But wept and gazed, and wept again.

And at the grave, when on the lid
Above where Ellen's face was hid,
The sod fell heavy, he did start,
As if 'twas falling on his heart.

XVI.

Ah me! since that affliction came,
Life never hath been quite the same,
But round our home, and on us all
A gloomy twilight seemed to fall,
As if when she in dust was laid,
The dear departed left her shade.

I can discover, since that day,
That father hath grown old and gray;
And mother—though she saith "'Tis nought"—
Her quivering lip betrays the thought,
And when she fancies none is near,
I hear her murmuring "Ellen dear."

XVII.

And John, who whistled once, and sang,
Till long and loud the echoes rang;
If in the house or at the plow,
He seldom sings or whistle; now.

Nor doth Bob Lincoln in the mead,
Spring upward from the bowing reed
With half so gay and varied song,
Nor flies, nor carols half so long.

XVIII.

From out the grove, at evening still
More plaintive sounds the whip-poor-will,
And winds from forest verge, or brake,
More melancholy voices wake,
As if the wanderers had told
To branch and leaflet "Ellen's cold."

XIX.

The clock strikes three. That lingering chime
Was the retreating voice of Time,
That tremulous the hour hath told,
And cast it to the hours of old.

'Tis awful thus alone to abide
Where some familiar friend hath died,
Watching our life sands as they run,
And hear Time count them one by one.

To advance, as 't were, with measured tread
Toward the eternal Shadows dread,
And feel them as the traveler feels,
When evening dark with tempest steals
Along his path, and thunder's boom
Reverberates through the forest's gloom.

XX.

Hark! hark!--O, 't was the breezes' sigh
Oppressed with the owls' long cry—
"To who-oo-oo!"—as omen feared,
It is so lonely, wild, and weird.

XXI.

And she is lonely—none do go
To gossip in her dwelling low.

For there indeed 'twere vain to come,
Her ear is cold, her lips are dumb;
But pitying Heaven weeps above
The spot where sleeps our buried love;
And dews like glistening tear-drops lave
The sod that covers Ellen's grave.

Thus Mary spake. When morning's early beam
Broke o'er the hills, she slept, and dreamed a dream.

THE DREAM.

Her hour had come to die, and o'er the clay
The soul shook out its wings for, far away,
And up that path where Ellen's spirit flew,
(The earth and ocean fading from her view,)
She swiftly sped,

and still careering fast,
The utmost planetary worlds were passed.

The sun grew indistinct, and far on high,
Another sun, unseen by mortal's eye,
From dim recess of space, its beams unfurled,
That fast approaching, grew a blazing world;
And lessening fast, a dying spark appeared,
And other sun of brighter beams was neared,

That vaster system lit; and others yet
 In long succession rose, and shone, and set,
 Till far beyond where suns describe the days,
 And stars the night—or wandering comet strays—
 The world's forsaken

in her upward race,

And heaven's last taper lost in distant space.

Now while her spirit seemed to pass in haste
 Through vaster solitudes of airy waste,
 That Science's toil and Fancy's flights defied,
 A lone infinitude on every side,
 A wondrous thing befell;

nor light expired,

Nor night's dark curtains fell when suns retired;

But brighter day—and brighter yet was born,
 As early traveler meets the advancing morn.

The wide expanse with gold and purple burned,
 And colors fair, that mortal ne'er hath learned.
 All hues that grace the flowers of earth were there;
 And nameless tints hung quivering in the air.

Sweet strains of melody unheard before,
 Now faintly swelled as from some distant shore,
 Come strains of music, when the vagrant air
 Finding Æolian harp in bower fair,
 Steals softly o'er,

and from the ravished strings

To far off ears the pilfered sweetness brings.

Now through the void increasing splendors spread,
 Flashed from a world of brightness far ahead,
 As oft on earth,

when gloomy night enshrouds,

A mighty shout went thundering thro' the void,
Prolonged and echoing: ere the echoes slept,

Ten thousand hands, ten thousand harp-strings swept
As thus they sung,

(words half in sweetness drowned,)

"The dead now lives again—the lost is found."

As winds career, the joyful tumult passed
Through Heaven; each burst remoter than the last;
Till like a ball's rebound, the burden fond,
Was roused again an ocean's breadth beyond;
And oft repeated—

then, as sinks the day;

The far retreating triumph died away.

"Throw wide the gates," from eager crowds was heard,
A gate of pearl flew open at the word,
And ere high noon on earth,

(she died at seven,)

The wond'ring pilgrim breathed the air of Heaven.

As peasant maid, accustomed from her birth,
To smoky rafters, and a floor of earth;
When brought to kingly hall, sees overhead
A starry dome—beneath her noiseless tread
Fabrics of eastern looms—and sees dismayed,
In mirrors huge, her own rude form displayed;
So overwhelmed with terror and surprise,
The bashful stranger stood with downcast eyes;
While crowds approaching did their steps delay,
And pausing, courteous, turn their looks away;
Till, she grown confident,

they round her pressed,

And sister Ellen came among the rest.

'Twas Ellen yet, as if when gathering nigh

Her dying bed, to catch her latest sigh,
The soul impressed

with image of the clay,

Bore its distinctive features ; far away,

She seemed in gesture—lineaments the same,
And who had known her once, would call her name ;
But as the sun on polished metal streams,
And wakes a light more dazzling than its beams ;
So now that face,

so earthly fair before,

The brighter image of the heavenly bore.

And Mary saw, and smiled to see her care
For others' good, as watchful here, as there.

There, 'twas her voice the ruffled spirit soothed,
And her's the hand that sickness' pillow smoothed.

She saw each need—she heeded every call,
And had a word, and helping hand for all :
And now in Paradise

her watchful eyes

Detect each little want, as wants arise.

Is aught mislaid by one, and vainly sought,
She trips away, the missing thing is brought.

Is vesture soiled—does curl disordered stray,
That is composed, the stain is brushed away,

Do winds disturb a garland on some brow,
Her busy hands adjust the chaplet now.

Song is rehearsed, or tale repeated o'er
To careless ears that lost the strain before ;
With thousand other arts

that love beguiles,

And wins the costly merchandise of smiles.

What words can paint the scene : 'tis hard to teach,

Immortal things, by forms of mortal speech.

As child (in nursery tale) by goblin hand
Conveyed from cradled rest, to fairy land ;
On towers of gold sees gems profusely flung
Like drops of rain—and strives with simple tongue
To tell the wondrous tale—

so Mary tries,

But scarce can break the silence of surprise.

“ He dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”

High—lifted up—a cloudy structure stands,
That sure from nature's inspiration sprung ;
“ No hammer fell, or pondrous axes rung ”
On yonder vast expansion ; round its crest
Are rainbow wreaths ; below, and ill repress'd
By smothering darkness, black as raven's wings
A host of fiery exhalations spring.
Like brandished torches—or from thunder cloud,
As hosts of lightnings burst their sable shroud
In quick succession, flashing and retire
Back to their chambers : darkness is on fire
From veiled Divinity,

that flameth out,

And lighteth His pavillion round about.

Around the temple's base (that seems to rest
On mount of jasper, broad as Ocean's breast ;)
A golden canopy of cloud is spread
Over the worshipers—that else had fled
From blaze too dazzling bright

to be endured—

Till far and wide by sheltering mists obscured.

From out the “darkness thick,” there comes a roar,

(Like ocean breaking on a rock-bound shore)
Of Hallelujahs, as the "sound of seas"
Rising, and falling with the varying breeze:
Or joined by throngs without,

swell high, and higher,

As far-off nations pause, and aid the choir.

The temple's outer courts are girdled round
With winged couriers—home, or outward bound,
That pass like glancing meteors,

to and fro,

As round some isle, the sea-birds come, and go—

Some, swift descending, fold their pinions bright,
Some issuing forth, spread out their wings for flight;
And fast ascending, leave behind a trail
Like Northern lights that arctic skies exhale.

With courteous word,
they pass the homeward bound,
Pass into space, and fade in the profound.

As these vanish, brilliant points appear,
From distant courts and worlds, approaching near;
Shining ambassadors,

that gathered there,

Ten thousand times ten thousand, cleave the air.

"Within my Father's house," the Saviour said,
"Are many mansions"—if that whisper dread
Of "worm undying,"

hath such boundless scope

As "many mansions" hath—alas for hope.

Seen by celestial telescopic eye,
That conquers space, and brings the distant nigh,
A universe of cities loads the ground,
That earth might girdle in her annual round:

A congregation numberless, of powers,
 Of thrones—dominions—palaces and towers :
 Of terraced mansions, spires, and public halls,
 Each a transparency, with jeweled walls
 And dazzling hues, that make the gazer sigh,
 “These sprung from revery of the Most High :
 Too consummate for art, that potent word,
 That rent the veil of night hath here been heard :
 “Let there be Light :”

as on creation's morn,
 When Nature burst her shroud, and Time was born.

In pictures grand, that vie with skill divine,
 Nature unfolds each limitless design
 Of wood, and sounding glen, and valleys fair,
 And guards her rude domain with jealous care.

There, groves of cypress cast a pleasing gloom,
 Midst flowering forests of perpetual bloom,
 With walks and pools,

o'er which the lilies lean,
 And troops of flowers in varied robes are seen.

Ten thousand founts their costly cups o'erflow,
 Where round and round the tinted bubbles go
 But soon, these mimic ships—

too rudely toss'd,
 Are with their freights of beauty, wreck'd and lost.

The rill, to vale, a river's tribute pours—
 Rivers like oceans, wash remoter shores :
 And mountain crags are piled—as if was hurled
 High up, the fragments of a shattered world :
 That angel wanderers from every land,
 Might come to revel in the wild and grand ;

And reared to soothe that musing love
that clings

In heart of ruined man, to ruined things.

Compared to rocks that seem to hang in space—
 With jutting crags that have no resting place;
 With peaks on peaks,

in savage grandeur piled,
 The Alps are baubles of a Switzer's child.

Not all of savage grandeur, and of fear;
 The pine, a cloud of foliage lifteth here;
 O'er dark abyss, the venturous fir trees stoop,
 From dizzy heights, the cedar's ringlets droop,
 Each glen and dim recess

is thronged with flowers,
 And beauty nestles in a thousand bowers.

O'er all this vast array of plain and mount,
 Of endless cities, stream, and rill, and fount;
 From yon cathedral fair a glory streams,
 In which the sun would faint, and hide his beams;
 Yea, myriad suns,

if forced to exhale the fire
 That lights this vast emporium—would expire.

"I saw the tribes of Israel in their tents."
 To count the population that frequents
 These fields and avenues—if Time should pass
 One of a world of atoms thro' his glass,
 For each inhabitant;

when all had run,
 His task herculean, would not be done.

If all the quick and dead of women born,
 Since Eve first travailed on Creation's morn;
 Summoned—should rise, and come with one accord,

To join the mighty household of the Lord :
The vast array would vanish

mid the bless'd,

As drop of rain is lost in Ocean's breast.

Did angel wanderer career—or float
As slow and difficult to climes remote ;
As man propelled by coursers, or the breeze,
Creeps o'er his little continents and seas ;
The far off friends, he fondly calls his own,
Were naught to him—their forms and speech unknown,
And to their distant homes,

his thoughts would stray,

As vague as mortals thro' the milky way.

As fast careering, as electric fires,
The slaves of science, run along the wires,
The journeying Angel flies, and unconfined
The eye and ear, the messengers of mind ;
Or darts afar—

or lures melodious sound

From space above ; or Heaven's utmost bound.

As oft on earth, pervading far and wide,
A Sabbath stillness reigns at eventide :
When Nature's pulses cease, or softly beat,
And wide dissevered household's laughing greet ;
And voices musical, come stealing o'er
The valley wide from group at Cottage door ;
So when Celestial eve sinks wide and still,
And soothing twilight falls on tower and hill ;
Sound seems embalmed—as floating from afar,
Greeting or song, like voices from a star,
Traverse the silent air—

nor fail to reach

The distant ear ; communing each with each.

Or when in far, illustrious public halls,
Assemblies meet ; seen thro' the Crystal walls
As bees in hives of glass : if some old sage
Rehearses deeds from History's ample page,
Or poets numbers chant, or low, or loud,
Some princely Orator harangues the crowd ;
The distant list'ner can hear at will,
Or lonely rest in brooding silence still,
As man receives discourse ;

or hears it not

When lost in revery, the sound forgot.

Nor art—that passes art—and seems inspired,
Nor fine device of Nature, more admired :
Not all the mysteries the heavens fill,
So illustrates the Father's power and skill,
As the diversities

of form and face

That mark in endless maze, the Angel race.

For tho' they are numberless, not one can call
Other his counterpart, among them all.

Yet are they like : as if a circle 'round,
Was drawn by artist wondrously profound ;
Who thus decreed. “ Within this narrow space
Shall dwell diversities of form and face
With close resemblances ; not one shall pass
These outward lines, or see as in a glass
His image counterfeited—

not too near,

Nor too remote ; but each distinct, and clear.

Various their forms and faces, as the flowers,

Their manners, attitudes, and mental powers ;
The last unbounded.

Knowledge hath no bar,
To mind's expansion, none hath said "Thus far."

And wide the space betwixt the young and gay,
Who sing and dance the joyous hours away ;
And they whose far exploring

Sails have cast
Their shadows on the ocean of the past.

The curious eye may trace them as they pass
In slow development from class to class,
And mark the ascending stages.

As they rise
From youth's simplicity to gravely wise,
These, wild as storm-toss'd wave that scorneth rest,
Light as the foam thrown upward from its crest.

They know, ('tis all they care) their Father nigh,
Watches his darlings with a sleepless eye ;
Pleased with each quaint device, and childish whim,
As oft for fond applause they look to him.
For God, to mortals vague and undefined,
Is ever present to an angel's mind ;
And they, to win his smile

their arts employ,
As earthly father sees his curly boy.

Thus joyously enacting life's prelude,
Years roll away, and other thoughts intrude.

Some legend old embalmed in minstrel's lay,
Or tales of heroes of an earlier day,
Awakes inquiry, and in dance and song,
They pause from revelry, and ponder long

Thus toiling on a spacious field was won,
Where many worlds in circles wide might run,
And strong and watchful

sentinels were set

Along the line where light and darkness met.

And now had come the long expected morn,
To plant the wilderness with empires, born
Of God's creative power; and far and wide,
Thousands of leagues away on every side,
Were waiting multitudes,

and high above,

Were clouds of angels, silvered like a dove.

In mute expectancy they look to where
The banner waves, for God the Son is there,
And God the Spirit—lo, through all the void
A tremulous brightness darts, that seems employed
In new creations; worlds begin to grow
Like stars in midnight sky, with fiery glow,
Enlarging fast, till each a ponderous globe,
They looked like jewels in an azure robe,
That hands divine

(smoothing the drapery's flow,)

Spread o'er infinity, that sleeps below.

Over the mighty concourse silence broods,
And wondering awe enthalls the multitudes.

Where fast and far the darting splendors run,
They see the infant orbs but just begun;
And silently they watch them as they grow
To full maturity; for well they know
The Holy Ghost is there—His form concealed:
The "chief among ten thousand" stands revealed;

Each one its species,

but alike in this,

Hate was their common bond, and strife their bliss.

Who cheer'd the faltering bands where many bled,

The hope forlorn through dangerous passes led,

And stormed the heights; they loved to hear and tell,

The new creations, and the fond farewell

To parting emigrants, were epochs rife

With grander memories than common life

That lured the youthful mind

to studious hours;

That charmed his fancy, and enlarged his powers.

As genius rears its pyramids of song

O'er human progress, or colossal wrong;

O'er giant enterprise, or fields of strife,

Where nations died, or nations sprung to life;

So Heaven's higher art, o'er scenes and times

Of sterner enterprise, and darker crimes,

Hath rear'd its lasting monuments that stand

Down the long past, like peaks in mountain land.

BOOK II.

Bright were the scenes in dramas of the past,
Or if with transient sorrow overcast,
Actors and audience felt

that brief distress,
Was but the path to ultimate success.

One tragedy there was, remember'd yet,
And they who watched its course, will ne'er forget,
That deep engraved in living hearts remain,
As on some dungeon floor the dark red stain
Tells in its silent way

where victim bled,
The stealthy step, the struggle, and the dead.

Here, in the careful Father's daintiest bower,
Beneath the very shadow of his power,
Sin's specious voice was heard, and creature frail,
Heeded the temptress' cry—"Macbeth, all hail;"
And "wither'd hags," and

"wild in their attire"
Danced round the "bubbling cauldron," and the fire.

The hour when first repining fancies sprung
In princely Lucifer, when high among
The assembled peers, he saw with envious eyes
The glorious vision of the Father rise

In clouded majesty—

and heard the songs

Of praise and wonder from admiring throngs.

His startled consciousness of sin, and shame
 For base ingratitude to God, till came
 A sense of wrong for regal power denied ;
 His doubts, and fears, and ever-growing pride,
 And stern resolve to be like the Most High,
 To live the observed of all, to reign or die ;
 Though from his comrades

carefully concealed,

By History's groping fingers was revealed,

His frequent absence from the council board,
 His mute abstractions, and the mutter'd word :
 His bold presumptuous gaze—fixed, deep in thought
 Upon the " Silent One," as if he sought
 To weigh his wrath, and prudently foresee
 If come the worst, then what that worst might be :
 His vain attempts by sorcery to forecast
 The future years, and read them as the past :
 All the descending stages of his fate,
 From love to fear ; from fear to deadly hate,
 A thousand records tell ;

and when at last,

All doubt dispelled, the " Rubicon " was past ;
 The subtle sophistries and arts malign,
 The burning eloquence, almost divine,
 That dazzled and seduced the glittering rings
 From their allegiance to the King of kings ;
 The dark conspiracy—the boding dread
 That like a thunder cloud o'er Heaven spread ;

The terms of peace repulsed with scoffing slight,
 Till Justice frowned, and Mercy's cheek grew white :
 The waves of battle surging to and fro,
 The kingly shout—the flight to shades below ;
 The poet tells, and with such tragic power,
 Conjures to view the actors and the hour ;
 That he who reads,

seems on that tempest toss'd

Fears, and exults, and sorrows for the lost,
 As in some plague-struck mart, where death hath
 learned

Some potent art, by science undiscerned ;
 They meet in mute amaze, and words too weak
 Their funeral faces eloquently speak,
 So when the battle passed, they looked in vain
 For old acquaintances, ne'er seen again,
 Pale was each visage, and the troubled eye
 Questioned, and answered with the mute reply,
 " Where are the comrades

of an earlier day,"

And sadder glances answered, " Where are they."
 Wide through the heavens a consternation spread,
 And silent groups went sorrowing for the dead
 Midst their accustomed haunts—as when the earth
 Seized with convulsions, stills the voice of mirth
 In some gay Capital sad groups are seen
 Scanning the ruins with dejected mien ;
 And dark imaginings,

that fain would know

" How look the faces now, that sleep below."

On distant provinces the tidings fell,
 As on some household falls the funeral knell :

And startled worlds—'till now unused to tears,
 Surprised—were filled with strange unwonted fears,
 And anxious thoughts that could not comprehend
 How moral death could be, or life could end ;
 But half believed them

creatures of the brain,
 Who once their joy, were now an aching pain.

“Thou hadst a dream, and now 'tis passed away ;
 Sure 'twas an idle dream :” “I tell thee nay ;
 A something real occupied this spot ;
 It lived and died. It was, and then was not.
 It had a breathing form, was conscious, fair,
 But soon became impalpable like air ;
 Yet as a dream when waking breaks the spell,
 It vanished, sunk, but how, I cannot tell.”

It was, as heavenly Chronicles rehearse,
 A grievous mourning to the Universe,
 As if the worlds arrayed in

funeral gloom,
 In long procession followed to the tomb.

And rumor said, and rumor was believed,
 That for his children lost, the Father grieved :
 That o'er his visage high, at times there came
 A shade of sorrow, like a fainting flame
 Obscured by passing mists,

as if he said
 “Ephraim is not.” “My first born, and my dead.”

And so it came to pass in after days,
 When memory's conjuring wand, the lost did raise
 All signs of grief

were carefully suppress'd,
 Lest he they loved so well should be distress'd.

But as the "house of mourning" on the earth
 For man, is safer than the "house of mirth;"
 So even in paradise,

(the record says)

"Wisdom was justified in all her ways."

Ere they were chastened, "Evil" was a word
 The fame whereof their careless ears had heard
 As "something to be feared;" but from that hour
 They learned in suffering, its fearful power
 To "trouble Israel;" there did begin
 A loathing horror of the name of sin—
 A hatred passionate,

that much abhors

The wily hag, of death the fruitful cause.

And ev'ry pang of grief, and bitter tear,
 Made vice more hideous seem, and virtue dear.

And so from seraphs old, whose thoughts explore
 That sea whose surges roll and find no shore;
 Down to the youthful angels lightly gay,
 Who sing and dance the joyous hours away,
 All are imbued with knowledge

that insures

Their safety while eternity endures.

Such pictures fill the student's lonely hours,
 And so impels his crude but grasping powers,
 He deems the past, its changes and decay,
 Worlds waxen old, "like vestures laid away,"
 The "store-house of the Almighty,"

wide and high,

Will scarce his nature's boundless wants supply.

And future years the Father calls his own,
 Their undeveloped mysteries unknown;

In these obscurities with upward spring,
Imagination spreads her daring wing;
Ranges at will, and saith "They're
fair to see,
But less than things that have been, and shall be."
As mind expands, and brings from fields of thought
Their golden sheaves, a growing sense is brought
Of his great Father's greatness;
every where

In past eternity he finds Him there.

Each far excursion down the vistas dim,
Of torch-lit history, proves a path to him
Who still presides where ancient millions swarm,
"Rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm;"
And every where

the multitudes are stirred
As woods by tempests where that voice is heard.

Conscious of knowledge vast; unconscious yet,
That finite knowledge hath its limits set;
He vainly seeks to find .

the Almighty out,
 "With clouds and darkness curtained round about."

As eaglet, mountain born, full fledged at length,
Soars towards the sun exulting in his strength;
But wearied out comes back with panting breast,
(His pride rebuked,) to seek the sheltering nest.
So rash enquiry, soaring upward, faints,
And fluttering down, come home with sad complaints;
"Dazzled with beauty,

weary and afraid,"
And faltering Reason calls for Fancy's aid.

Replying each to each,

as when on high,

The thunders seem conversing in the sky.

In this seclusion where no pulses beat,
And none intrudes, the Almighty's lone retreat;
His musing solitude, as man retires
To muse in lonely glen when day expires,
She paused again, the dews upon her brow;
Awe-struck and sore afraid she whispered now,
"Ancient of Days

forgive the herald sent,

Are these vast shades the curtains of thy tent?"

"I am," a voice replied; "I am" again
Broke from eternity in far refrain.

Her daring hopes rebuked, and wiser grown
Of what may be, and what may not be known,
"Of that obscure," he saith, (whence Reason fled,
Where wild Conjecture stood in trembling dread;)
"I do remember me that Wisdom saith
'Those shoreless deeps are called "the Realms of Faith,"'
Where the Almighty Father

dwells apart,

And sheds a shadowy prescience on the heart.

Here is an Infinite enough for thee,
There is a limitless infinity,
Where vessel of research

is aimless toss'd,

And finite wanderer for ever lost.

Yet as a watch-fire throws from rocky height,
Far o'er a midnight sea the tell-tale light;
So Knowledge's lamp, if lit at Wisdom's shrine,
Reveals the utmost part of the Divine;

And as supplied with oil it brighter glows,
Profounder depths, and vaster circle shows;
For ever widening

as the flashes go,
Yet leaves an endless sea that none may know.

Thus step by step he comes to comprehend
That 'tis his chiefest good, his highest end
To know the Lord, and leaving things revealed,
Still press toward the infinite concealed;
His distant goal

eternity and space,
A tireless runner in an endless race.

As bolder aim and brighter hope appears,
He grows in beauty as he grows in years.

A solemn grandeur spreads that visage o'er,
Where simple innocence was seen before;
As mountain scenes

of cliff, and peaks, and storms,
On mountain child daguerreotype their forms.

But not as man, in whom the curse of pride,
With gentle Learning groweth side by side;
These have no secret vaunt,

nor open boast,
But he is lowliest who knows the most.

The ancient hierarch, whose life hath been
Made up of periods unknown to men,
Of his long gathered lore, is not too fond,
But meekly sees the infinite beyond;
And estimates himself

as simple youth,
Who "gathers pebbles on the shores of Truth."

No written law, that loud appeals to fear,
 And saith "Obey, the avenging sword is near:"
 Nor gentle precepts

falling like the dew

Restrains, or urges the angelic crew.

Their ruler holds such feeble bonds in scorn,
 That evil breaks, when virtue's locks are shorn;
 And to his subjects hastens to impart
 A mightier law that binds them heart to heart:
 A law that speaks in gentlest

tones of love,

Its harshest notes, the cooings of the dove.

If thousands congregate in hall or bower,
 Or gay companions while the passing hour;
 Or busy groups,

or idle wanderers greet

They seem like lovers as their glances meet.

As maid beloved, puts on an aspect cold,
 To hide her own, 'till others' love be told;
 But in unguarded moment near his side,
 Forgetting all her maiden fear and pride;
 Thrilled with his voice, looks up in quick surprise,
 Her heart's dear secret beaming from her eyes;
 So angel glance

with ardor seems to burn,

So fondly passionate the quick return.

Here, where each calls another's good, his own,
 The homely word "Contentment" is unknown;
 And "joy" itself, and "rapture"

are too weak,

For glowing ecstasies, that none may speak.

The hours are ships from far enchanted land :
 The moments, mariners, that load the strand
 With fruits and fabrics rare, and promise more
 So rare and costly from that friendly shore ;
 And expectations so unbounded rise,
 That reason chides with Hope, when Hope replies
 " How canst thou call

my wildest wish 'excess,'
 When boundless power and love delights to bless."

It is not here the weakest hath the worst—
 As on the earth) that maxim is reversed
 And simple innocence

hath at its call
 Like regal power, the gathered strength of all.

In crowded avenues, if thousands meet,
 In halls of learning sit at wisdom's feet ;
 Or dress the flowery mead with quaint design :
 Or hands industrious train the vintage vine ;
 If tireless coursers bear a radiant throng
 O'er hill and plain, or rivers' banks along ;
 Or pensive companies sit down by stream,
 Listening to Chronicle, or poet's dream ;
 Or dip the oar—careering side by side
 In golden skiffs, reflected by the tide :
 Where'er they congregate—by sea or shore,
 That charming scene is acted o'er and o'er ;
 Where princely Jonathan,

by virtue won,
 Threw his own robe o'er Jesse's Shepherd son.

And round the mount is seen that gentle deed,
 Where wanderers meet in numbers that exceed

The population of the earth thrice told—
 A girdle 'round its base, would thrice enfold
 The earth's circumference: and a mortal's eye
 With aid of telescope, would scarce descry
 Its misty peaks; that seem exploring space
 To find another Heaven and other race;
 Yet leaves to vague

conjecture and debate,

If forms of life are there, and what their state.

A tender impulse moved the Father's hand
 To rear this pile amidst the promised land
 Of fairy palaces—for in angel's breast
 There is a want, if baffled is distress'd
 For Nature's rugged ways—

as man, in Time,

Expands amidst the awfully sublime.

And so the Father called for grandeur vast,
 And round his form his shaggiest mantle cast;
 The wrecks of aged worlds,

dissolved in storms,

In clouds ascending, petrified to forms.

Now, all aglow with brilliances of life:
 If sportive groups engage in friendly strife
 To scale the cliff above, or rocky tower;
 Or grope in caves to find a wondrous flower,
 Famed for its fair, but melancholy hue;
 In darkness born, in dripping coolness grew:
 And famed for long resistance to decay,
 When borne by pilgrim wanderer far away;
 Yet pines for home,

and as the exile sighs,

At last by hope deserted—drooping dies.

Are white-robed lilies, linked in garlands, flung
 Round fair young brows, with glossy curls o'erhung
 Midst shouts of fond applause; or others bend
 O'er dark abyss, where fearful depths descend,
 And awed by mystery, listen to the flow
 Of some imprisoned stream that moans below:
 Or drop the massive pebble, still and dumb,
 'Till hours away, the answering echoes come;
 Or soaring high, on moveless wing survey
 Oceans of vast upheavals lone and grey:
 In ev'ry circumstance of time and place—
 In all diversities of form and face
 That gallant maxim reigns,

that "Wealth and power,
 Are held in guardian trust, as Weakness' dower."

One custom strange that men on earth retain,
 Who searches for in Heaven, will search in vain.

No son of science, nursed in schools that part
 Moral, and mental—intellect and heart:
 That gives to intellect the highest seat,
 While moral truth like beggar from the street
 Sits down in lowly guise, though royal born,
 A mark for ribald jests, and plebeian scorn;
 That saith to God,

"that footstool is thine own;"

While heathen gods sit on the great White Throne.

No son of science, cunning, and acute,
 But dwarfed in moral growth—and so minute,
 That he who hears its voice, doubts if it be,
 And brings celestial microscope to see;
 Creeps 'round this awful monument to find
 Some bone, or pebble that absolves his kind

From law divine ; and restless, strives to wrest
 From nature's rude, but bold and loyal breast,
 Some signal, or response,

that gives the lie

To sacred history's page, and prophesy :

And demonstrates, (as kindred fools applaud),
 That fair Religion "is the child of Fraud."

If such amidst these wonders groped and blinked,
 In other days, the species is extinct :

And if in excavating in the ground,
 Its fossil skeleton by chance was found ;
 It would at once the finder's

fortunes raise

"And make abundant sport for after days."

Such tales and pictures, Mary still averred,
 Were in her morning vision seen and heard ;
 When to the light of paradise

inured,

And when by gentle courtesies assured.

But now, emerging from the cloudy screen
 That veils divinity, a form was seen
 That drew the eyes of all ; no crown he wore,
 Nor badge of rank his simple vesture bore ;
 And none officious heralded his name,
 But voices sunk to whispers as he came,
 And then to silence—every head was bowed
 In reverence, as he passed the brilliant crowd,
 Exchanging greetings

with a quiet grace,

That drew delighted smiles to every face.

Nor giant stature his, nor eye of fire,

Nor presence of command; but something higher
Marked his development,

that well defined,

Revealed a princely Leader of his kind.

His brow expansive, marked with lines of care,
And bright as evening star, had something there
That awed,

as grandeur awes the hearts of men,

When girdled round by cliffs in mountain glen.

So did one seem o'ershadowed by the vast,
As if the solemn ages as they passed,
There writ their chronicles; that one by one,
The years, in long procession as they run;
Had paused before the student, to rehearse
The gathered wisdom of the universe.

Who fixed upon that front his wond'ring gaze,
Ponder'd too rudely in his mute amaze;
Till waked to consciousness, he would refrain,
Then lost in thought would turn and gaze again;
Such massive beauty marked his brow, and so
Flexile and changeful was the face below;
That every shade

of other's feeling caught,

And sympathetic mirrored back its thought.

Was one of princely dignity addressed,
His features then a grave respect expressed;
But did his wandering glance fall on the young,
A merrier mood than theirs, impulsive sprung;
As if his "childish things," not

"Put away,"

Were brought to age; an age without decay.

The light and pensive, thoughtless and profound,
 Was seen, and answered as he glanced around;
 And every shade of feeling mirrored clear,
 "From grave to gay, from lively to severe,"
 In speech and air of one

that others styled

"The accomplished scholar, and the little child."

Onward he came, as vessel cleaves the tide,
 Through that refulgent sea to Mary's side.

"I marvel much," she said, when they had first
 In light desultory way awhile conversed;
 "I marvel much that paradise doth show
 Such high respect to mortal poor and low.

It is as if a city's heart was stirred,
 That, loud proclaimed, a beggar's coming heard;
 And through its streets a mighty pageant swept,
 To grace the wretch that in its portals crept
 In tattered garb,

that they might well deride,"

"Thou dost mistake," the angel quick replied.

"The lowliest child of Adam, steeped in crime,
 That drifteth hither from the storms of Time,
 Comes introduced,

and heralded by Fame

As one who bears the heaven's loftiest name.

The Bride of Christ, as Eve from Adam's side,
 When wrapt in sleep was born a perfect bride,
 So man from Jesus' sleep,

derived his breath

A second time, and Life was born of Death.

If from a man, a breathing lump of clay,
 The germ of men and things was plucked away

In Eden's solitude, and that the birth
 Of all the tribes and cities of the earth;
 What future glory waits the race, for whom
 The 'Lord from heaven' travailed in the tomb,
 And wrapt in a profounder slumber,

died,

While his beloved was taken from his side?

What deeds shall they perform, what trophies raise,
 What states and empires found in after days;
 Whom prophets old announced as

'priests and kings?'

As 'heirs of God,' and legal 'heirs of things.'

Who views the darker side of human life,
 Sees pride and cunning, lowly wants, and strife;
 Where each one lives to multiply his store,
 And who hath most, he most doth sigh for more.

'So much,' he gravely saith,

'derived from thine,

And one to carry adds so much to mine.'

Their common life, if taken at the worst,
 Appears like peaceful duels, interspersed
 With joyless revelry and moods of ire;
 Now wild with mirth, fantastic in attire,
 Now furious, covering acres with the dead,
 Then settling down (the paroxysm fled)
 To peaceful frauds,

some laden with the spoils,

And others famished, fainting under toils.

And who but glances at such world of knaves,
 That never satisfied for ever craves;
 Will wonder why the Saviour

left his throne,

To link their lowly fortunes with his own.

But closer view discerns the jewels gleam
In caves, half smothering its misty beam.

The most degraded of the race betrays
Some marks of gentle birth and better days;
And in disgrace a consciousness retains
That princes' blood is coursing in his veins.
As if in weariness of sin and shame,
Comes dim remembrance of a place, and name
Some far-off isle that

lifts his father's towers,
The home of earlier days and happier hours.

And as the prodigal in affluence born,
Midst low carousals views with secret scorn
His rude companions, abject and forlorn ;
So gently nurtured man, from plebeian toils,
And low distress instinctively recoils,
Frets at the tide,

that sweeps his works away,
Resisteth Time, and wrestles with Decay.

But vainly wrestles, for above the mould
Where 'Ellen dear,' is wrapped in clay too cold ;
He rears defiantly the marble block,
And carves her record on the lasting rock ;
And leaves it there.

With solemn charge to keep
The long, long vigil o'er his darling's sleep.

And 'O,' he saith, 'when stranger's feet shall tread
In days remote, around her lowly bed
Heedless of my Beloved—

do thou proclaim
With stout persistency, her slighted name.

Let years innocuous pass these letters plain,
And ages brush their rugged curves in vain.'

But lo, ere yet the mourner's pulse is stilled
With dust and moss, those chiseled curves are filled,
And lo, the shaft, oppressed by ages' flight,
Like weary sentinel outwatched by Night,
Nods o'er his task,

falls prostrate in the dust,

And to oblivion betrays his trust.

Wide is the gulf that separateth men
As what they are, from what they might have been;
But wider yet the illimitable sea
'Twixt what they 'might have been,' and what shall be.

As germ of perfect manhood lieth hid
Beneath the infant form and closed lid;
So ripened manhood in its best estate,
Is the minutest germ of something great
Concealed in future years;

as mists enshroud

The distant mountain, swaddled in the cloud.

And that the germ of something yet to come—
The cradled infant, helpless, weak, and dumb,
Compared to what eternity

shall show,

A grand development, that God doth know.

And so we watch the fortunes of thy race,
The struggle and debate 'twixt sin and grace
In every human heart, and deem each soul
A lawless world, that broken from control,
'Hangs blind and blackening, in the eternal way;'
Beyond the reach of shower and solar ray:

Its herbage withered, and its fountains dry :
 'The Tides are in their graves,' ' 'Tis lost!' we cry ;
 'No power can save—too wide the wanderer strayed,'
 But reaching forth, the Almighty hand that made
 Arrests the truant,

that again appears

In the majestic circle of the spheres.

The scathed and blackened mass with sluggish pace,
 Like foundering ship, rolls heavily in space.

Dead to projecting forces that impelled—
 Dead to attractive sympathies that held,
 'T will perish yet, but lo, there is above
 A form—a form, it seemeth like a dove
 Of pure white plumage,

hov'ring round the ball,

That guides its motions, and prevents its fall.

Away, away, it plunges through the air :
 'Tis lost—'tis lost ; no, no ; the dove is there.

He stoops below with sudden,

rapid swing,

And fans it upward with his spotless wing.

Another fall, again the watcher sprung,
 And bore aloft, as eagle bears her young.

Now, as it gains its wonted force once more,
 A fairer herbage grows, unknown before ;
 And gayer tribes of plants

and flowers appear,

• Than Nature's hand untaught by grace could rear.

And groves and forests filled with sweeter song,
 Where breezes much enamored, paused too long.

The waiting cloud did chide the lazy air,
 For his long dalliance in those bowers fair ;

'How can I crown at eve

the mountain's crest,

Or join the congregation in the west.'

Adown the vales majestic streams are led,
From 'smitten rocks,' and secret fountains fed,
And 'wells that spring to everlasting life';
And wood and vale, and shaggy peak are rife
With brighter luster

than the lurid glow

That made the darkness, darker, long ago.

Fair as the Moon, its borrowed glories light
The distant traveler's pathway thro' the night:
And shed a gentle

radiance afar,

A world is saved; hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!

Who strives to number all, will strive in vain,
That born in earthly homes, and born again,
Have grown to greatness here; and many a spot
By man unvisited, and long forgot,
Will draw the pilgrim's feet as classic ground;
And oft described, the scenes that girt it round:
For there a Name

become a household word,

In Zion's palaces, at first was heard.

Yon structure vast, imbued with changeful dyes,
Its minarets, veins of light, that pierce the skies;
Its groves and columns stretching leagues away,
Where seraphs old with list'ning students stray;
And youths are taught the sciences of Heaven,
By sages famous as the Grecian seven;
There one presides—

a mortal born, whose name,

Unchronicled by men—hath grown to fame.

And while on earth a deep, and deeper gloom
Hath gathered round his birthplace, and his Tomb;
And so remorseless is oblivion's ban,
That none doth say of him—'There lived a man';
His star is here ;

and who, as years unroll,
Can cast his horoscope, and read the scroll?

An orphan he, nor yet in wedlock born,
The child of shame, deserted and forlorn ;
Nursed by the sons of toil, that sore bestead
To win their own half-famished children bread,
Gave doubtful welcome to their meagre board,
And watched with jealous pain, the less'ning hoard :
Almost denied—

yet coldly bade him share,
For pity gave what penury ill could spare.

Thus, fed and hated by the tattered crew,
Who pitying gave, and grudging, half withdrew
His stinted morsel,

bought with shame and tears,
Passed slow and sorrowful his early years.

But as the mountain pine still lifts its form,
And grows apace when wrestling with the storm ;
And when assaulted by the tempest's shocks
Its roots instinctive clasp the anchored rocks,
And gropes in darkness and exploring feels
For things unyielding, as the column reels
'Till towering high, it casts a shadow wide
O'er sheltered vales at morn and eventide.

So did his rugged nature

grow erect,

Fostered by pain, and nurtured by neglect.

When youth had passed, and sterner toils began,
And storms of envious hate raged round the man ;
His soul that groped for God when he was young,
Now round the Rock of Ages closer clung ;
And some admired

what secret source supplied

That soul that lived where thousands might have died.

From such deep root, the man to greatness grew,
And won the love or hate of all who knew,
As one whose heart another's grief could feel,
Who hated evil with a prophet's zeal ;
Whose brand and plume were foremost in the fight,
When wrong assailed, and valor struck for right ;
O'er fallen virtue stood,

like bear bereaved,

And with the good and gentle, smiled and grieved.

Justice was pleased with one so true and brave,
And to his hand, her sword she smiling gave ;
For well she knew where turpitude was plain,
That mercy's pleading tears would fall in vain :

Yet mercy loved him well, for she had seen
The pitying mood he vainly sought to screen ;
And marked, and heard

the quiv'ring lip, and sigh,

When law stood up, and guilt was doomed to die.

And oft in solitude, had heard his prayer
That God would save the wretch, he could not spare ;
And mourn that man no sacrifice

could give,

Or rear a cross where guilt might look and live.

The widowed mother and her orphan brood
Looked up to him for sheltering care and food.

The oppressor's victims sought his side, and they
Who staggered wearily along the way,
Too heavy laden,

and whose hopes had died,
Who had no helper, found a friend and guide.

It needed not a prophet to foretell ;
On evil times and evil tongues he fell.

The pride of envious men could not endure
To live o'ershadowed by a name obscure,
Of lowly birth ;

nor bear the bright contrast
Of virtue by their side ; it could not last.

His foes vindictive, talked of 'justice sold ;'
His friends seduced by lying tales, grew cold
Just when triumphant

envy's gathered wave
Rolled o'er his head, and crushed him to the grave.

That cot wherein he drew his earliest breath,
Re-echoed back his latest sigh in death.

A structure rude, deserted long before,
And where his mother hid her shame of yore,
When driven from her home,

her father's pride
Repelled his erring child, and where she died.

In ruins now, the floor defaced by stains
From winter snows oft piled, and driving rains.
The walls in rents through which the sky appeared,
And unobstructed, autumn gusts careered,

Save, (if too fanciful it doth not seem,)
 That heaven itself, (but 'tis an idle dream)
 Provoked at man's neglect, indignant spoke,
 When from the cloud, the deep-voiced thunder broke ;
 And as midst showers,

the echoes rose and fell,

That weeping nature tolled a hero's knell.

There, far secluded ; by the world forgot,
 No lettered monument to mark the spot ;
 Nor sculptured mourner bowed in mute despair,
 Hath the Almighty hid with jealous care,
 One of his jewels,

fashioned to his mind,

And in affliction's fiercest fires refined.

An oak, wide-spreading—crowned with leafy towers,
 At morn; (rude mourner,) weeps in dewy showers,
 And like wild harp responsive, softly sighs
 When summer gale o'er branch and leaflet flies;
 Or far abroad its plaintive wailing flings,
 When winter's ruder fingers sweep its strings ;
 In summer sighs,

and wails when summer's flown,

Above a form, once massive as its own.

No mortal knows his grave, but when the flush
 Of morn appears, or day's retiring blush
 Purples the west ; or through the moonlit night,
 Do gentle spirits come with steps so light,
 The soft impress,

nor bows the violet's head,

Nor wrecks the drops of dew, as round they tread."

"And are such creatures real?" Mary said :

"Some say there dwell in grove and forest green,
 And lone wild glen, the beetling cliffs between;
 Strange airy shapes, of undiscovered birth,
 Too gross for heaven—too spirit-like for earth,
 That oft emerges, clad in misty grey,
 From copse that skirts the lonely traveler's way;
 Or self creative, seemeth as it were
 Formed, and developed from the viewless air,
 To something tangible:

none knoweth how,

And stand revealed where nothing was till now.

It moves so phantom like, with noiseless tread
 O'er withered leaf, wild flower, and mossy bed;
 So unobstructed are the sunny rays
 That through its seeming substance, brightly strays,
 And where its shadow should be shineth clear,
 That he who sees will mutter, much in fear,
 'I see no foot print

where its foot was laid,

It glided there, and lo, it cast no shade.

Sometimes, in sportive mood, this wondrous elf
 Reveals his shadow, and conceals himself.

When o'er the fountain sleeps the languid air,
 And not a breath disturbs its surface fair:
 He bends (invisible above)

to show

His little shape daguerreotyped below.

And when the thirsty steed, approaching nigh,
 Swerves from the brink with apprehensive eye;
 And the vexed rider vainly tries to urge
 The frightened courser near the fountain's verge;

It laughs—the prodigy, with childish glee ;
 And other prodigies, who came to see—
 Themselves invisible, the burden take,
 And with loud mirth the sleeping echoes wake
 From thousand rocky caves ;

a merry noise,

Like ha, ha, ha, of little wanton boys.

Are there such presences—and are they true ?
 Those wild traditions of the muses, too ?

Some Legends fanciful of olden time,
 Describe a fountain strange, in Grecia's clime,
 Where sparkling waters rising far below
 In earth's dark caves, come up with ceaseless flow ;
 And he who drinks,

through all his veins it thrills

In murmurs musical, like mountain rills.

And if he hath by Nature's gift, an ear
 Attuned to melody, and lists to hear,
 The murmurs change to words,

and loud and long

His lips burst forth in everchanging song.

Around the fountain is a group divine
 Of shadowy creatures, called the Sacred Nine ;
 Who haunt the groves,

and watch the fountains play,

And laugh, and sing, and weep, by night and day—

And when one drinks, and murmuring voices rise
 Within his heart, they place before his eyes
 A pictured roll ;

that though most strange it seems,

Their pencils painted in the land of dreams.

And he must watch and sing, as they unroll,
'Till on his spirit's hearth the fire is cold :

And then they wait,

'till wild with fluttering pain,
He seeks the bubbling fount, and drinks again.

Is the tale mystical, where man would find
A key, to secret wonders of the mind
By band invisible of three times three,
From—"ayont the shore, and ayont the sea?"

BOOK III.

The angel answered smiling, "I suspect
A Greek of Pindar's era, would detect
Some errors in the tale: it matters not
If half the tale was learned, or half forgot.

When Zion's light hath spread, and Grace hath brought
A higher type of man, and nobler thought;
The enlightened schools,

will change the heathen's scheme
To grace the Christian Church, that reigns supreme.

When to the prophet, rapt, the Spirit sent
Those gales that shook the folds of 'Jacob's tent ;'
And inspiration sung that song of cheer
To Zion's daughter, faltering, and in fear :
'Lift up thine eyes and see'—what troops are these
That hither come, from distant lands and seas
With costly offerings :

by land and sea
The tributary nations come to thee?'

'Twas not of kingly power, nor golden heaps,
Nor diamonds rare, nor pearls from coral deeps
The Spirit spake—

shame were it to bestow
On Jesus' gentle bride, such offerings low.

When rapine's hand, some hamlet's blood hath chilled,
And age is mute, and childhood's voice is stilled,
To seas, the tempest howls it in his wrath,
And to the tombs along his haunted path;
And hoary mountains

 hear with frowning brow,
'There, where, 'twas vocal once, 'tis silent now.'

A fluttering tremor seizeth branch and leaf,
When winds to woods rehearse some tale of grief;
Perchance of ruined mansion on the waste,
That men approach in fear, and fly with haste;
For tragic memories noted

 far and wide,
And shunned as 'haunted,' by the country side.

When its dark outline meets the traveler's eye,
He spurs his steed and passes swiftly by.

Within its precincts lovers fear to stray,
And thence the huntsman calls his hounds away
With startling earnestness,

 • nor cares to wake
Its spectral solitudes for Reynard's sake.

There the marauding spider, silent all,
Stretched her grey tapestry along the wall,
And mocked the hands,

 now nerveless in the tomb,
'That once industrious plied the busy loom.

There shapes impalpable, ('twas said,) like mist,
From shroud and coffin kept their nightly tryst;
For 'lated traveler had seen them flit
From room to room, on soundless foot, and sit

Fast by the ingle—mother, children,

sire—

And brood on hopes that death had quenched as fire.

What did the maniac there? since reason fled,
She daily came to gossip with the dead
That seemed to live,

and to her crazed brain

They seemed to speak, when echoes spake again.

And there she sat, and with old friends conversed
Of other days; and many a tale rehearsed
With lively air, asserted and denied,
And fretful grew when her own voice replied
As sharp and positive, and fast she spoke,
And faster yet the clamoring voices broke
From every angle sharp and dim recess,
Till round the visitor did seem to press
Old forms and faces,

and the place was rife

With all the bustling stir of real life.

Alas for her, when Reason's torch threw out
Some fitful gleams, she started, looked about
With sudden consciousness; then cowering, wept,
And down the tangled pathway moaning crept,
To escape from where her hopes, last

sands had run,

And her young dreams had faded one by one.

Alas for her, when pitying soul came there
To drive away the shadows of despair
With hope from heaven, and standing by her side,
Conversed of God, and told how Jesus died,
She could not comprehend; but long would gaze

Into the speaker's face in blank amaze,
 Mute as the shipwrecked child when cast among
 Some stranger tribe, he hears th' unwonted tongue,
 And scared as sparrow

when there cometh loud,

The eagle's scream from out the drifting cloud.

Or winds to woods repeat the tragic tale,
 How far to sea where ship doth seldom sail;
 Where vast leviathan doth ne'er intrude,
 Nor sea-bird dare the awful solitude;
 There rolled a ship amid the billows gray,
 Dismantled quite, her bulwarks swept away;
 And when we came with 'lifting leaches' near,
 And 'Ship Ahoy' rang out in accents clear,
 No moving forms were seen or voice replied,
 As charging billows thundered 'gainst her side
 At measured intervals, and breaking, threw
 Their foam above that coffin of her crew,
 By famine stricken,

and that lay asleep,

Rocked by the throbbing pulses of the deep.

The infant fount 'forgotten by the foot,'
 That steals from under some gigantic root
 On mountain top, or creeps from dim recess,
 Where cliffs almost embracing, light repress;
 'God' is the burden of its first low cry,
 And plaintive farewell to its sources nigh;
 Its murmuring music as it glides along,
 Or falls, the burden of its tinkling song;
 That mixed with sighing winds,

and song of bird,

(Alas for that poor soul that hath not heard.)

As fast descending, other fountains greet,
 Each hath its tale of wonders as they meet,
 Swelling the chorus till the gathered rills
 The congregated woods and caverns fill
 With hallelujahs, and the slender reed
 Shakes in the melody, as on they speed
 Through twilight vistas, to the vale below,
 Where wandering along with gentle flow,
 The traveler tells to flowers, that listening stand,
 Of dim cathedral in a mountain land;
 Its pillared aisles, its 'dim religious light,'
 Its choirs that chant the hymn by day and night;
 Its altars high, of Him who dwelleth there,
 O'er all his works his tender mercies are;
 And some have heard him charge the
careless rain,

'Do not forget my lilies on the plain.'

Flowers nod their little heads, 'tis so indeed,
 And cheerful bids the bustling brook 'God speed;
 We pray thee, noisy friend, go tell
 This thing by every nook and dell;
 For it may be if told to all,
 And they are good, no frosts will fall,
 Nor chilling winds will ever blow
 To dim these robes that grace us so.

And when thy time shall come to die,
 Do breathe it with thy latest sigh,
 When on the bosom of the deep,
 The tired wanderer falls asleep.

The river wide, where multitudes of rills
 To join the host have hurried from the hills,

Now leagued together,

the majestic stream

Sends up its offering on the morning beam.

It murmurs 'God' o'er spacious valleys spread,
And roars his name, through narrow gorges led,
Or o'er the precipice

with thundering jar,

Through echoing forests sends the word afar.

And when at first, ascending tides embrace
Descending floods that know their trysting place,
A rippling tumult rises,

and the choir

Of many waters swell the anthem higher ;

Then turning downward to the ocean bears

The awful name of God that ocean scares.

'What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou didst fly,
And as thou fledst didst lift thine hands on high?'

What ailed the embattled cliff, his forehead gray,
Deep seamed, and thunder-struck in midnight fray
Lights up, as if that One had come at length,
Who bade him curb the ocean's restless strength,
Long, long ago,

and now his guerdon won,

He waits to hear the word 'Well done, well done.'

'Tis not the Creed, that all that God creates,
Have tongues that praise him in Creation's gates
That sylvan creatures

dance through moonlit hours,

That saps and enervates the moral powers.

The poet's dreams (not more, but less than truth
As they must be), attend the vigorous youth

Of growing states,

and urge an Empire's rise;

But wo to nations when the fervor dies.

When lust of gold, slow creeping through its veins,

The body politic, no power retains

To travail with that spirit life,

that grown

To everlasting youth, renews its own.

No 'Scio's birth,' nor 'Stratford's giant child,'

Nor 'Bard of Paradise' its age beguiled

Back to its early dreams: too little worth

Its means and ends; too sensuous to bring forth

The higher forms of life, itself impure,

Its bards become artistic, and obscure,

Wrapping old platitudes

in empty sound,

Folly is wise, and darkness is profound,

When human life, successful, and full fed,

Turns its broad face to Heaven, untouched by dread;

Then Heaven sees precursors of decay

And final death, or near, or far away

The tangled thicket;

the encroaching wild

Spreading o'er fields, that once with plenty smiled.

The City old, that sat a Queen before,

Sits down a widow now, her glories o'er;

And sees the stream, that once her pride did nurse,

Creep slow along, a turbid stagnant curse,

To choke the air and undermine the wall,

'Till arch, and tower, and temple, tottering fall;

Changing the busy hum,

to silence deep,

Where Desolation folds her wings to sleep.

Yet haply comes some wanderer from afar,
Guided across the waste by glimmering star
Of vague tradition ; and in evening dews,
And morning grey, sits lonely there to muse ;
And trace the wrecks thrown up by
century's surge,
From broken column chants her final dirge.

And once again, when Time with beckoning hand,
Hath called Oblivion o'er her grave to stand,
Do wanderers come, and deep explore the clay,
To wake some answering voice from dull decay :
While steed and camel,

crop the herbage green,
Tether'd together, but with gulf between.

The steed endowed with some mysterious sense,
Gazes about in quivering suspense,
And starts at ev'ry sound,

and seems to know

That dust of buried men is hid below.

His small ears vibrate on his graceful head.
As if he listened for the ghostly tread
Of something felt,

but yet not quite discerned,
The stupid camel grazes unconcerned.

The muse mythology, that had its rise
In Grecian Lore, was borrowed from the skies :
And as the 'Sons of God,' forgot their birth,
And 'took them wives of dwellers on the earth';
So, lured by Genius, did the gentle Nine
Their homes of innocence and peace resign,

To mix in scenes of violence

and lust,

Till fair Religion names them with distrust.

But when the time shall come, (as come it will)
 When lust of gold, 'the root of ev'ry ill,'
 Hath crept through all the avenues of life,
 And fraud and cunning, in perpetual strife,
 Wrestle together: and when in the street,
 Suspicions' brooding scowl confronts Deceit;
 When eager, watchful, jealous of a foe,
 Each striving to avert, or aim the blow:
 They wear their vices

to protect from ills,

As bristling porcupine erects his quills:

When Justice, bought and sold, her bolts hath hurl'd
 And war and pestilence rebuke the world;
 And ghastly famine every where appears;
 When rising from its fields of blood and tears
 Amazed humanity discerns the cause,
 And him who hoards the shining dust abhors:
 Then will the muse's energy impart
 A mighty impulse to Religion's heart;
 And ranging wide through oceans, earth, and air,
 They'll surely bring to deck their mistress fair,
 'The glory of the Gentiles'

all their pride,

Her handmaids bring from far, to deck the 'Bride.'

The Muse of Sculpture, cold, but loved of men,
 And they who guide the pencil and the pen;
 Will each in Zion's Courts

a priestess reign,

And Music, all her wonted fires regain,

Dejected maid, they said 'midst festal throng,'
(For they who wasted her required a song)
When loud and furious the revel grew,
And o'er the lyre her hurrying fingers flew;
She'd pause, forgetful of her theme, and pale,
Change the light glee to low and plaintive wail,
That spoke of sorrow so profoundly deep
That they who listened, could not choose but weep
With one so fair, whose tears were falling fast
As if her thoughts were busy with the past
In her own land,

where she did whilom sing,
And wand'ring pluckt the early flowers of spring.

For hope of Heaven the muses turn away
Even from the fascinations of decay.

For much they love the vigil lone to keep,
Where cities burst like bubbles on the deep;
Or, glide within deserted hall, or cot,
Where busy mortals were, but now are not:
Wave round the hearth-stone, Fancy's magic wand,
And conjure back from shadowy vales beyond,
The vanished household, and when all are there,
They do delight to mingle, as it were
In their fond schemes;

the loves, and hopes and fears,
That stirred the little group in former years.

A wondrous magic hath the ruin grey,
Where human hearts have throbbed, and passed away,
The nine with melancholy joy to fill,
And stir their sympathies; but dearer still
They love to linger with suspended breath,
Round the obscurities of Sin, and Death.

And half in wonder ; half in terror gaze
 Into those mists when lighted by the blaze
 Of Prophet's fire,

as through the stormy night,

The electric fluid darts its tongues of light.

But more than all, would linger round the Cross,
 That still must be as endless ages toss,
 Creation's landmark, the Hegira great,
 From whence the future and the past will date
 Their long, long annals, and the epochs old—
 The ancients, hoary ages will unfold
 Their dusty records, and begin to trace
 Their altered lineage to the time, and place,
 Where Heaven's sovereign

gave up his breath,

And Christ became 'Obedient unto death.'

Some far, far hour, such countless cycles o'er,
 History would reel beneath the cumbrous store ;
 When little group of ransomed souls shall meet,
 With pebbly fountain bubbling at their feet,
 In lone melodious dell, apart from all ;
 And each to each in conference recall
 The cherished scenes of time ; beloved so,
 That memory clinging, will not let them go.
 When thus they meet,

one theme will seem the best,

The Cross, the wondrous Cross, will hide the rest.

The Cross will be, (as ages glide away,)
 The fruitful theme of Heavenly minstrel's lay :

And this the theme when by and by shall rise
 In lofty strains, the epic of the skies ;

And this in wrapt attention

hold the young,

When evening tales of Heaven are said, or sung.

In days remote, the seraph old will tell

To youthful spirits, how it once befell,

That God, in Christ,

was overwhelmed with hate,

And doomed by mortals, met a felon's fate.

And when the passionately chanted tale,

Stranger than fiction, makes his hearers pale ;

He'll lead them forth, and pointing earthward say

‘See ye yon lustrous planet, far away :

That fairest orb ; appareled like a bride,

Her Moon, like maiden walking by her side?

That world, now fair, was once in olden time

A place of sepulchres, the hold of crime:

The favorite hunting ground of Death and Hell,

Haunted by demons, swept by passions fell,

That over empires rolled their wasting flood:

Its early histories were tales of blood,

Of murders huge, of slaughters ribald, wild,

Of fields with mutilated corpses piled

In ghastly heaps : and gaily was it done,

With gaudy streamers fluttering in the sun,

With sounds of music too,

the air was filled,

Some waked sweet voices while the others killed.

There once in lowly guise did the Most High,

For deadly enemies descend to die.

The prophets dreams of Christ—as, ‘who is this

That comes from Edom, traveling in his

Dyed garments, steeped in blood? What mighty birth,
 From Bozra's shades, majestic treads the earth,
 The Old Waste places,

and the ruins hoar

Of many generations to restore?'

Rouses the muses like a trumpet blast

Hailing the resurrection of the past;

Inspire their thoughts and dreams, by day and night.

When tempests veiled the sun's declining light;

'Melpomene' wandering pensive from the crowd

To the white margin of a thunder cloud,

That led the vanguard of the coming storm;

She wrapt its misty drapery round her form,

And sunk to sleep, and dreamed she saw one stand

High on Parnassus' top, with harp in hand

Sweeping its strings: at first it seemed a hymn,

Chanted by Hope, amidst the twilight dim

Of Time's nativity,

Creation's morn,

And o'er the cradle where thy race was born.

Anon, it changed to melancholy dirge,

Rising and falling like the Ocean's surge

On rock-bound shore

and then 'twas piercing sharp,

As shriek from hell had rent the quiv'ring harp.

Again it seemed that Mercy bathed in tears,

Was wailing low amidst the wrecks of years;

And widowed Nature,

clad in weeds of grief,

Wept o'er the withered flowers, and fallen leaf.

Now, 'twas like trumpet's animating strain,

That hails the leaders to the battle plain

Who to his shatter'd

columns brings relief,

Or city's welcome to a conquering chief.

Sometimes 't would vacillate from grave to light,
Affronting evil with contemptuous slight ;
Inspiring Truth

with words of lofty cheer,

Or whelming Sin with bitter, withering sneer.

From Calvary's summit, Faith inspired the song,
And danced before it, as it passed along
To later times ; and led by prophet's light,
It passed the present, boldly pierced the night
Of future ages, ringing in the glen
Where children sported 'round the serpent's den,
And ere the lingering strain

to silence fell

It echoed far and wide Time's last farewell,

When near the border of the darksome vale,
His race complete, with wild excitement pale ;
He heard a mighty voice that shook the shore,
Swear by the Lord that time should be no more ;
He paused apace, the final sands must run,
Watched the slow filtering atoms, one by one :
Threw up his glass triumphant,

leapt across,

And in eternity's vast shades was lost.

Mute were the listeners while the lay was trolled,
And round the earth its swelling volume rolled.

Where'r 'twas heard, there hurrying men delayed,
And o'er their tasks, industrious hands were stayed

The ploughman stopt

with half his furrow turned,

The schoolboy had but half his lesson learned.

The smith astonished did forget to beat
The glowing iron, till it lost its heat,
And on the anvil's surface

sharply rung,
Cold as the hammer that suspended hung.

The ship boy listened, clinging to the shroud ;
The steersman old, forgot the storm was loud,
And fixed on vacancy his

dreamy glance,
Till sails aback, and flapping, broke his trance.

Within his lone retreat the student grey,
Deemed 'twas an echo from an earlier day
Cleaving the centuries,

as loud and clear,
The classic numbers floated to his ear.

Young lovers walking in the dewy even,
Conversed of God, Eternity, and Heaven ;
And boisterous little ones, from sports refrain'd,
And each to each in earnest tones explained
Religious mysteries ; or many prest
Where some slight orator harangued the rest
About eternal things,

and with the lore
Of twice three years, did endless years explore.

They leaned attentive to their gifted mate,
But nobly claimed the freedom of debate
By contradictions, ev'ry one could show
Wherein the speaker erred—' 'Twas so, and so ;'
And each asserted

with a knotted brow,
And gestures positive, that 'this was how.'

The speaker courteously responded 'yes,'
Then much in haste went on with his address ;
Quite undisturbed

by childish manners free,
His pride unhurt, 'the feint a pride had he.'

Round sickness' couch the weary hours were whiled,
Vice shrunk abashed, and gentle virtue smiled.

As thus she dreamed, the cloud whereon she slept,
Had been by gusts, and eddy currents swept
From front to centre of the tempest dark,
Where airy whirlpools toss'd it like a barque
Midst breakers thrown,

and crashing thunders broke
So loud, she starting from her dream, awoke.

Darkness was blazing ; vivid sheets of light,
And rills of brilliancy, too dazzling bright,
Pierced the obscurities, above, below,
And vapory masses hurried to and fro,
Each, as a charging squadron fast careers ;
While sounds like chariots roll, the crash of spears,
The boom of guns ; the triumph and defeat,
And distant voices, dying in retreat
Were mixed,

as if confusion did rejoice,
And wild magnificence had found a voice.

The tragic muse in pleasing terror gazed,
While thunders rolled around, and lightnings blazed,
Till past the storm,

she drifted to the west,
And o'er the setting sun, in state did rest.

Curtains of azure, gold, and purple deck'd
 Her floating couch, with silvery spangles fleck'd,
 And feathery vapors,

white as ocean's foam ;

And wasteful splendors lit her chamber's dome,

A rainbow fair, of many colors blent,
 From pale to vivid, propt the spacious tent ;
 Its eastern base supported by the deep,
 And curving over with a graceful sweep ;
 Now to her thought a tragedy recalled,
 That had at once instructed and appalled,
 When many waters

rising in a rage,

Obscured earth's scenery, and swept the stage,
 ' 'Tis long since then,' she murmured, 'long ago
 The master of assemblies hung his bow
 Athwart the cloud ; and underneath its arch,
 Have generations kept their steady march
 Four thousand years, and as it once did grace
 The "Exeunt Omnes" of almost a race ;
 So will it hang till they again

retire

From stage and scenery all wrapt in fire.

How strange is human life ; how fair the earth,
 On which these weird immortals have their birth.

How passing strange that God should so adorn
 A home for creatures sinful and forlorn ;
 And have that stage with costly

pomp arrayed

Where scenes so ghastly, are announced, and played.

O yes, 'tis strange, that landscape, oh how fair,
 One scarce can realize that death is there.

Lake, stream, and ocean,

all are glassy still,

Save where the wild bird dips his wing or bill.

'The forest's dark green foliage wet with showers,

The fragrant homely furze, the dripping flowers ;

That bow their heads as if in musing sweet,

They watched the moisture stealing round their feet,

And thought

“how bravely in the winds we'll dance,

And bear unmoved the Sultan's fiery glance.”

These creatures lovely and diversified,

Are ghosts of things that whilom lived and died.'

As thus she spake of life, and death's contrast,

Her dream recurred that for a space had past ;

And all its parts revolving

o'er and o'er,

As evening fell, she slept, and dreamed once more.

Close by that fountain in whose pebbly cup

Castalia's waters toss their bubbles up ;

She in her vision saw a mountain rise,

Whose towering summit pierced the starry skies ;

And from its breast another fountain burst,

That cured all sicknesses, and ills accurst

That flesh is heir to,

and that did in truth,

Restore to palsied age, its long lost youth.

And he who drank the wave, was born anew,

Became a child, a youth, to manhood grew ;

Approached life's border land,

with cheerful breath,

Sprang lightly o'er, and turning, laughed at death.

Yet few approached the sacred fount to drink,
Nor greatly worn the herbage round its brink.

Among that few, one sad, with eye intent
Surveyed the multitudes, that heedless went,
Though many a glance that way,

the crowd did give,
When heralds shouted thence, 'come, drink and live.'

Then sorrowing much that fountain ope'd for sin,
Did bootless run to waste; he did begin
To cast about for some device to bring
The healing waters, to the classic spring;
And leagued together,

send them round the earth,
With voice of melody to every hearth.

A heavy task; for though not far away
Each from the other, yet between them lay
Many obstructions, such as ruins vast
Of ancient fortress, pleading for the past;
Of groves and altars, where for learning sent,
The youth of Israel divers worships blent;
Brought Christ and Belial

to close accord,
And worshiped images, and served the Lord.

Of finely sculptured stones, and masses huge
Of rock, rolled thither by the great deluge,
Or shaken rudely

from the mountain's brow
By fires within, or grew, and none knows how.

Along that way that mocked a mortal's toil,
And might an army's hardest efforts foil;
He did begin as one in reverie lost,
Or one too rash to pause and count the cost;

To shape a causeway for the stream to run,
And move the smaller fragments one by one;
But all unconscious

that he did progress,
And win his way with wonderful success.

Too wrapt to see what others clearly saw,
Matter released from gravitation's law.

Yet ofttimes pausing in a mute surprise,
To see great boulders from their beds arise
When lightly pressed,

as if from earth and air,
The powers invisible were working there.

The conscious earth did seem to loose her hold
From blocks of granite bedded in the mould,
And toss her nursling

upward from her breast,
When by the laborer's hand but lightly pressed.

And when some hindering mass approaching near,
That Archimedes' science scarce could rear;
He did begin despondingly to grieve,
Those unseen friends the baffling rock would heave
Light as the thistle-down, and strange to tell,
Each block and boulder fitted where it fell
With nice precision, as if they were brought
By master builder of far reaching thought,
Long, long ago,

to serve on distant day
As rough materials to pave the way.
Thus toiling on obscurely day and night,
As insect toils unseen on mountain height,
The last obstruction was removed, and lo!

Thither, attracted by its healing fame,
The weary multitudes at evening came;
At early dawn,

or oft at noontide heat,
Reclining, listened to its murmurs sweet.

Dull, heavy age its soothing tones could hear,
When other voices vainly smote its ear;
And sire and grandam

loitered on its brink,
Listening and doubting, stooped at last to drink.

The man from business' bustling scenes came there,
His sallow visage marked with lines of care;
Attentive heard, and straight there did begin
To haunt his soul, a heavy sense of sin;
Of shame and penitence for health destroyed
In hoarding wealth for selfish ends employed,
In such a world,

that weary with its load
Of sin and sorrow, reels along its road.

And from that hour by Helle's stream beguiled,
The hard, keen worldling was a little child
In fraud and cunning, merciful became,
And like the gentle Bayard won a name
For lofty chivalry, because his heart
Did with the poor and outcast still take part.

Thus living daily
till his dying day,
Without reproach or fear he passed away.

Thither the shepherd loved to drive his flocks,
And there the maiden smoothed her shining locks,
But quite forgot

that she was young and fair,

Such thoughts of penitence and heaven were there.

And when the sun threw back in silvery lines,
His farewell glances at the mountain pines,
And evening fell, the mother's task complete,
She guided thitherward her children's feet,
And felt secure that such melodious strain
Oft heard in childhood, would not be in vain,
But haunt the memory,

and in after days

Lure back the wanderer to virtue's ways.

Along its banks the hand of cheerful toil
Won golden harvests from its teeming soil;
And many cottages and hamlets neat,
Village and city with its crowded street,
Dotted the banks, or climbed the neighboring steep
Down to the sandy margin of the deep,
Where the clear current mingled with the main,
To rise in mists and then descend in rain
On tribes and languages

of many a shore,

Till tribes and languages shall be no more."

As thus conversed the angel, they who heard,
Had been at intervals amazed and stirred
By strains of music from the mountain side,
And hallelujahs that to harps replied,
As if with thousand tongues

the mountain spoke,

And rocks and hills their lasting silence broke.

Well might the mountain sing, for chaos' child,
Who wore his shaggiest robes in riot wild,
Was ne'er so petted;

nor did beauty praise

With such exultancy, his rugged ways.

On cliff and parapet, on boulders gray,
On tottering towers of rock, they stand, or stray
In shining groups, or wandering, or at rest;
And far on either hand from foot to crest
Are flying brilliances,

now lost to sight

In dim recess, now issuing forth to light.

Some soar aloft, where barren summits lift
Their awful tops, and then descending swift,
Baffle the eye, that sees but ribbons bright
Facing the walls, and some with easy flight
Curve round the precipice with graceful swing,
And then ascending up with fluttering wing,
Are lost in deep ravine; some hover round
The cedar tops, then sink to dark profound,
Or fast emerging,

glancing to and fro,

They gild immensity, above, below.

Though distant far, such countless voices swell
Their sacred songs: they sing so wild and well;
And praise is mixed with music so profound,
The ravished winds raise up the dying sound
That fainting falls and on and onward floats;
And so protracts the sweet and lingering notes,
To join the melody

each bosom heaves,

And silence's self, that he is voiceless grieves.

Now while they listening stood, a mighty shout,
Wild as an army's battle-cry, rang out;
And raptured millions

swelled the loud applause,

When high in Heaven's serene, appeared the cause.

As they might seem, descending from the moon,
When night's fair queen attains her highest noon ;
So, far aloft did floating angels lay,
In ranks on ranks spread out like war's array,
The squadrons crescent shaped,

convex before,
Their numbers as the sands on ocean's shore.

Smooth was its surface as a sleeping tide,
And wing to wing, but diverse hues divide
In grand divisions,

and the eye detects
Where each bright host with other intersects.

There, a long line of azure robes unite,
And borders on a line of spotless white.

And these, a glancing
drapery display,
As moon-beams on the rippling wavelets play.

There, orange colors darkly tinged with green,
Are side by side with flaming vestments seen,
And simple violet

parallel doth run,
With gorgeous robes, like clouds o'er setting sun.

The central column, hath by one consent,
More costly drapery with jewels blent,
And wide reflects

as down descending nigher,
On things below their splendors of attire.

Their crimson robes are crossed by bars of blue,
These studded thick with stars of silvery hue,
And these begirt with

cinctures that enfold,

Linked each to each, with thousand threads of gold.

One massive gem is blazing on each breast,
Fair as the sun when sinking in the west;
And smaller jewels

glitter in their hair,
That makes their lustrous faces yet more fair.

Stilled their applauding voices, and the cheer
Ceased as the vision grew distinct and clear :
Too deep their thoughts for shout,

or muttered word ;

And now, a chanted melody is heard.

None could translate the fervid song they sung,
To the rude patois of a mortal's tongue,
But this the burden on expansion flung.

“ Father beloved, and Thou, the Eternal Son,
And All-pervading Spirit, Three in One :
Ancient of Days : Whate'er thy children see—
Or see they not in vast Infinity,
Are but Thy shadows

on the canvas cast ;

But light impressions where the Almighty passed,
And all the hosts of worlds, and heaven and earth,
And dark abyss where monsters have their birth
Are fitting lights and shades,

that space receives,

And unimpaired th' exhaustless substance leaves.

But not for this, O Father, does the fire
Burn on affection's altars high, and higher :
Nor springs the passionate desire to be
' Nearer my God, nearer my God to Thee,'
From cold Supremacy that dwells alone,
And makes the deep foundations of his throne

Justice and Judgment :

that too coldly pure,
Affrighted Virtue fears, and dwells secure.

But Thou art Love, and all that hath been told
Of other's tenderness, is icy cold
Compared with Thine, who bidst all else depart
But simple love, and traffics with the heart,
And barter all thou hast,

and far above
All other things, Thyself, for simple love.

O Father, teach Thy children dear to raise
Sublimar songs, with sweeter notes of praise,
And let each say

in ecstasy of bliss,
'My Well Beloved is mine, and I am His.' "

On that descending plain, no wing was stirred,
As slowly settling down their song was heard :
And armies motionless

on ether lay,
When trumpet note dispelled the bright array.

The columns parted first, and clear was seen
Spaces of sky, diverging lines between ;
And now the squadrons each from each retire,
Then all dissolve, as fabric touched by fire.
Now hanging motionless, or moving slow,
Like curdled atoms, lit by evening's glow ;
They pause a space,

then wheeling upward pressed,
They vanish in the mountain's rugged breast.

When past the dream of beauty, Mary said
"Is there another Heaven overhead,
Fairer than this, from whence this pageant fell ? "

"Far in the chambers of the south, they dwell,"
 The angel said: "If thou shouldst go to view
 A century's flight across the fields of blue;
 Thou wouldst discover (when thy goal was won),
 A host of worlds revolving round a sun,
 That leads his ponderous flock

such circuit o'er,

That 'wildered science stops, and counts no more.
 The wide area they girdle in their flight,
 Was once the home of unillumined night;
 Peopled by furies, and chimeras dire,
 Where undistinguished races, children, sire,
 All, in all other's blood

their hands imbrued,

Till they expired, by cold-eyed Fate pursued.

Into these regions desolate, and dread,
 The bolder sons of God their followers led;
 Invaded, and destroyed

old Anarch's reign,

And carved their empires from his wide domain.

I do remember well, when I was young,
 And long ere man's abode from chaos sprung;
 'Twas noised abroad that Alcemer did rise
 (His name another word for bold emprise)
 Among his peers, and moved a daring scheme
 To penetrate, to conquer, and redeem
 The southern wilderness, but little known,
 For fearful myst'ry claimed it for its own.
 Save daring wanderers whose wings had stirred
 Its outer curtains, oft had seen and heard

Strange shapes of fear,

and voices that appalled,

As if in shrieks, despair to horror called.

And when Alcemer, (in whose eyes of grey,
The lion and the lamb together lay,)
Revealed his thought, the assembled peers were mute,
Till old 'Lorates' (held in high repute
For gracious wisdom, o'er whose locks had fled
Unnumbered centuries) approached, and said,
'Dear youth, when thou hast come to riper years,
Thou'lt council less with rashness, more with fears.

Discretion mild,

is valor's better part :

Thou ailest here,' and touched the other's heart.

The flower of chivalry laughed with the rest,
When the old seraph's hand his bosom prest.

But when the Father High, (to whom he went,)
Approved the plan, and smiling gave consent ;
All Heaven sprung to arms—

and they who mocked,

And they who doubted, to his standard flocked :

Armies of armies came in fiery haste,
All burning to explore the fiery waste.

The millions he

enrolled, 'twere long to tell,

And then the parting came, the long farewell.

Months grew to years, and years to years were cast,
When long desired, a herald came at last ;
His visage darkly bronzed,

and told a tale

Of fields of strife that made the hearers pale.

And others came at intervals so wide,
 That hope, too long deferred, had almost died—
 And others yet, till on a distant day,
 When years to ages gathered, roll'd away;
 One hour o'er which fond memory's watch is set,
 That trumpet's voice waxed loud, and louder yet,
 That long before was heard

with boding fears,

When on receding friends we gazed in tears.

Yes, they had come : with shouts the skies were riven,
 Music and dancing shook the halls of Heaven.

The greetings o'er, and bursts of joy allayed,
 They were in haste to Heaven's Sire conveyed
 Obscured, and soil'd with many a blow and fall ;
 Begrimed and scarred ; their leader most of all,
 They stood before the Lord, who veiled his brow ;
 His Godhead hid—and all the Father now ;
 They loved (who saw) in after days to tell
 How deep his joy : how fond his glances fell
 On his worn sons ; and with what rapturing smile
 He chid Alcemer for his raiment vile,
 And hinted that,

“ bad company, alas,
 Had brought his darlings to a fearful pass : ”

But now the time had come for mightier hand
 To people, and adorn the conquered land
 With bright communities

of worlds, and light

A sun to warm, and guide their circling flight.

A joyous crowd, its limits undefined,
 That left almost a solitude behind—

Went forth, its vanguard headed by the Son,
Borne by the spirit onward, swiftly won
The borders of that lonely waste, that lay
In darkness once ; but now a twilight grey
Through the dim vista's struggling shadows, show
O'er crude consistence flitting to and fro,
As if midst their old haunts,

where darkness reigned,

The ghosts of monsters wandered, and complained.

The thousand leagues of life, that waited there,
Loading the shore, and hovering in the air,
Were awed to silence, as far out in space,
The Holy Spirit's movements they could trace
By dazzling gleams of light, as fast employed,
He rolled together from the formless void
The ponderous globes ; but when the Son did cry
' Let there be light,' and broke from orb on high
A sudden brightness.

Then the sons of God

Shouted for joy that echoed far abroad.

"Among the sons of God," the angel said,
And as he spake, his quiv'ring voice betrayed
His deep emotion ; "None was more admired
Than Lucifer, in blazing gems attired,
And oft they gazed

where in resplendent pride,

The ' Son of the morning ' stood by Jesus' side.

And when the wonderful put on his Grace,
And glided forth majestic in space—
His unrepressed effulgence glancing round,
With flood of glory lit the wide profound ;

And grasped each world, till one by one, the band
 Went on their courses, whirling from his hand ;
 No voice rang louder in the wild applause
 Than his, who since defied his monarch's laws :
 And none could guess

that spirit grand possess'd

Envy's foul poison fest'ring in his breast.

And many a graceful spirit with him fell,
 Whose radiant beauty left such lasting spell,
 That love appeals to hope, though o'er and o'er,
 She shakes her head, and says, ' they come no more ;'
 And love persisting,

piteous to see,

Hope's pallid cheek replies, ' it ne'er can be.'

Of all the families of worlds that glide,
 Or distant each from each, or side by side ;
 Or near, or where on far excursion toils
 Adventurous thought, and fainting, back recoils :
 Or groups nor near, nor far, that cruise between,
 And just discerned in space, their shiv'ring sheen :
 Among them all, no field wherein they run,
 With such heroic constancy was won ;
 No shining clan

that traverses the arch,

Hath brighter glow, or more majestic march.

From thence, these pilgrims, journeying through space,
 Have hither come to see their Father's face.
 And old associates, as a child of men
 In foreign land, bewails his native glen
 With hungering love, and saith ' I'll cross the sea ;
 That spot of earth is all the world to me ;

Where father toiled to win his children bread,
And mother dear, ere parting tears were shed,
Hung o'er her little flock,

and sisters fair ;

I must away, my heart's dear bourne is there.'"

Unseen they sportive climbed the rocky steep,
By winding paths, through twilight gorges deep;
Then to surprise,

sprang outward from its crown,
And all in bright array came floating down.

"Why was the central column," she inquired,
"In gayer robes and costlier gems attired?"

"Their home," the angel answered, "is a star
That draws the eyes of wanderer from afar
By its excessive splendor. Nature fair,
An everlasting gala

loves to wear,

As if eternal holiday was there.

The bloom of woods, and fields, and mountain, vies
With stream, and lake, and many-tinted skies.

Through seeming diadems founts spring to light,
And dance away o'er diamond pebbles bright;
Or down the vale the idle, winding brook,
That turns to gossip with each shady nook;
Glasses the lily, but the gem-paved elf,
Revealing image fairer than herself,
She chides,

but yet, delighted that 'tis done,
Smiles as she says 'O fie! O fie upon.'

Dwelling midst beauty—in the long sojourn
Their tastes are fashioned; as the wild and stern

Slowly developed in a

mountain race,

On mind and manners leaves a lasting trace.

When thou hast done with earthly cares and pain,
And back to paradise hath come again,
Thou'lt love to read the chronicles that tell
Of high and gifted spirits that excel
In wisdom, learning, eloquence, and power,
With music thrills to while the passing hour;
And breathless bend o'er many a tale of fear,
That told in tuneful numbers, charms the ear;
How hero sore beset on distant shore,
With horror's bristling pack, behind, before,
Outstared them all; and Fate, with hopeless moan,
Fled from a glance more fatal than her own."

BOOK IV.

Then Mary thus : " On earth, the Muse's friends,
On whom the true poetic fire descends,
Are deemed a helpless race, to hunger wed,
Shrinking from men, unskilled to win their bread ;
Exposed to fortune, naked and disarmed,
They die, and leave their heart's best blood embalmed,
For future years,

while they themselves have found
A single word, a name, an empty sound.

Are heavenly minstrels prodigies that seem
The fools of power and weakness, both extreme ?"

The angel answered : " Many sing, and some,
To whom the higher oracles are dumb,
Can please and elevate with graceful lays ;
But few are gifted with the power to raise
The accustomed levels of the mind,

and give
A higher plain to thought whereon to live.

None (as on earth) of these dejected sighs,
Nor hopeless lives, nor unrequited dies.

Our social joys we can not bid them share,
Nor from their hearts the brooding shadows scare,
Nor if we could disperse the shades, should dare ;

For fires are born

where darkest vapors loom,
And brightest flashes burst from deepest gloom.

Their fitful moods must be ; but when we meet,
Profounder glance and gentler accents greet,
And softer tones the trembling

.spirit hears,
Than love itself bequeaths to other cars.

See where the spacious valley spreading wide,
Sends through the gorge and up the mountain side
A long and narrow vein of fruits and flowers,
And still ascending lifts its groves and bowers
High up, as if the vale with gentle art
Had climbed to reach the sheltering mountain's heart,
And much enamored,

Grandeur vast had wed,
And taken Beauty to his kingly bed.

Now the dark clusters of the vintage vine
Loading the rocks, he saith 'See, these are mine.'

Near where those rocks' gigantic shadows fall,
A lonely spirit dwells, beloved of all,
But left to solitude, see how they fear
To invade the spot, but leave a wide area
Unpressed by wing or foot,

as well aware
The poet's dwelling is a public care.

Of human origin, that child of song,
Of brief career, (by man accounted long,)
Of thrice ten centuries, yet even now,
To his rude strains the ancient masters bow ;
And expectation waits till long inured
To daring flights, he sends (with powers matured)

His temper mild—

his aspect fair to view,
The bold barbarian a favorite grew.

And by and by, his daring feats admired,
They promised freedom : ere the date expired
It came to pass, a predatory band
Hungry from Ishmael's heritage of sand,
Stooped on his home ; and he who should be free,
By robbers sold to rovers of the sea,
And thence to others bartered by Manote,
And others yet, till toss'd to climes remote,
And conscious that his home might ne'er be seen,
With savage lands, and stormy seas between ;
He grew a desperate man, that fate defied—
Careless and reckless, drifting with the tide ;
By storms on Afric's

western border cast,
He found a home by Congo's stream at last.

As twice ten leagues the barque ascendeth up
From where that torrent fills its ample cup ;
In front, a promontory lifts its head,
As if descending down the river's bed
Between the wooded banks,

the grassy steep,
That ocean's fame had heard, approached the deep.

There like a watchtower, 'Ochran's' dwelling stood,
His vineyard's borders trailing in the flood ;
And on that slope the infant poet played,
For Ochran took to wife an Ethiop maid ;
Ere Heaven's frown

on fetish worship fell,
And science bade the land a long farewell.

While yet in infancy, the glistening toy
That charms the child, and wakes his wond'ring joy,
Was naught to him, but if a leaf was blown
From wind toss'd bough, and near his pallet thrown,
He grasped it eagerly,

or with a flower

Clutched in his hand, was silent many an hour.

And older grown, his well-instructed heart,
Turned quick, instinctive from the works of art
To Nature's galleries, where forms severe,
Were touched with tints

so beautiful and clear,

That none could say 'Thou failest here, and here.'

Ere he had grown to youth, the daring child
Was more familiar with the pathless wild,
The dark ravine, the cascade echoing glen,
By beasts frequented, but abhorred by men ;
Than with the well-worn paths

where others strayed,

Or green whereon his timid brothers played.

Ofttimes by moonlight, or at dawn of day,
He left his sleepless couch, and stole away
To loose his father's skiff, and glide across.
The dangerous ripples that tumultuous toss,
Where the two streams unite

in wild embrace,

To hasten seaward from their trysting place.

Sometimes they watched as through the heaving surge,
His little hand the rocking skiff would urge.
Float down the current swift,

approach the shore,

And then for days and nights was seen no more.

There in those wilds his earliest lays were sung,
And Nature listened to his stammering tongue.

The stern and terrible that waketh fear,
The gentle tones that beauty loves to hear ;
The awful storm of fallen seraph's grief ;
The low sad requiem o'er a fallen leaf,
Was poured by turns ;

by turns the pleading prayer,
Rose up to Heaven, and found an audience there."

"What should he know of God, his race accurs'd ;
In rites idolatrous their children nurs'd,
Strangers to Israel and the Gospel Word,
That neither law, nor mercy's voice had heard.

How should a heathen
find the Almighty out,
With clouds and darkness curtained round about?"

"I cannot tell ; 'tis vain to question so
The ways of God, how doth the infant know
At life's last parting hour, to find—and rest
His dying head upon the Saviour's breast.

To make a treaty
with the 'Strong to save,'
And through his ally, triumph o'er the grave?

That being great, who bade the planets roll,
Hath many avenues to reach the soul ;
And sure it is, the conscious Christian fled
In scorn, from groves where idol victims bled ;
And bowed by fountains

paved with sands of gold,
Amid the forest's pillar'd temples old.

Brief was his life : as captive exile pines,
 And beats the wall that his slow step confines ;
 In dreams converses of his native shore,
 And names his youth's companions o'er and o'er :
 So did his prisoned spirit

freedom crave,
 And round its fleshly walls impatient rave.

Ere twice ten times the annual lutus sprung,
 And ere twice ten the love-bird reared her young,
 The flame, that had

with wasteful flashes burned,
 Consumed its oil, and dust to dust returned.

Full thirty centuries have passed away
 Since in the twilight of a cloudless day,
 While glowed the west with sunset's lingering flame,
 Adown that hill a long procession came,
 Half from its summit,

to the wave-washed shore,
 And in their front his boyish corpse they bore.

Gently they laid him down, and lightly stept,
 As if he was not dead, but only slept
 A slumber light,

that careless ways disturbed,
 And voice and foot-fall must be nicely curbed.

Some, sad and silent, scooped his narrow bed,
 And some bent tenderly above the dead
 With low lament,

unlike the noisy grief,
 Poured forth by menials o'er a fallen chief.

'Twas strange to see how every one concealed
 A love, too passionate to be revealed

To others' view ; and yet was shrewdly guessed,
 From bursts of agony, but half suppress,
 As o'er the infant pale,

will oft arise

In pride's despite, the mourning mother's cries.

It was from Gambia, to the Cape of Hope,
 A grievous mourning to the Ethiope,
 And some admired how one of stature small—
 Shy, shrinking, sensitive, could so enthrall
 His ruder countrymen,

and leave behind

Such gentle despotism in the mind.

From eve till morn : from morn till dewy eve,
 They lingered round his grave, as loth to leave,
 And weeping pilgrims paced the trodden ways,
 Around his sepulchre, for many days—
 Offending solitude, that fain would keep
 Watch undisturbed above his favorite's sleep,
 And now the spark

that Heaven could claim, had flown,

Would have his darling's ashes all his own.

As time advanced, and generations fled,
 A wondrous gossip circled of the dead,
 That well believed,

was passed from man to man

In awe-struck tones, and thus the story ran.

'When storms from ocean, red with lightning's gleam,
 Flew up the avenue where rolls the stream,
 When loud and hurriedly the tempest breathed,
 And all that hill in flying mists was wreathed,
 The dead stood up to view, and oft was seen,
 His form enveloped in the flying screen

Of lurid vapors—

gazing far and wide,

Along the dark old forests, and down the headlong tide.
 And long the story circled, and roused the listener's
 fears,

Till the wild legend faded in dim and distant years.'

The earliest efforts of his muse, were lays
 That pealed on high the accomplished warrior's praise:
 For oft his father lived his battles o'er—
 (His children gathered round the cottage door
 At noon or eve,)

and told of 'Peleus' son,'
 Of 'Hectors' feats,' and 'Ajax Telamon.'

Nor did the minstrel dream, that there allied
 Was 'brutal force,' and 'superhuman pride,'
 Till wisdom came, and thrice she signed his brow,
 And said, 'Observe again, what seest thou now?
 Gaze long, and fixedly

with half-closed eye,

And leaning forward, what dost thou descry?'

'I see a huge, colossal-shape, arrayed
 In gaudy vestments boastfully displayed.
 Thrown o'er its monstrous head, a veil is seen
 Of tinsel ornaments, designed to screen
 Its hideous countenance: an idiot's stare,
 And wide extended, armed jaws are there
 Dripping with blood; the maid, her lover brings;
 Mother the son to whom she fondest clings,
 As 'martial glory's' offerings,

ever fed,

The idol is forever famished.

Gliding among the worshipers are some
 With bloodless faces, ominously dumb :
 Unseen, unheard, with eyes like beads of glass,
 Who shake the threat'ning finger as they pass,
 Accusing, and denouncing : two, aloof ;
 Nor share the idol worship ; or reproof,
 But still, observant stand ; one, on her vest
 Hath ' Mercy ' writ, and turns away distressed
 Yet glances back, as one who says ' farewell ;'
 The other's marble face is sternly fell,
 And dangerous,

as one who looks on crime,
 And says with whitened cheek, ' I bide my time.'

Among the crude productions of the child,
 Struggling to speak in ' native wood notes wild,'
 Some fragments are preserved, unwrit, but caught
 By hov'ring spirits ; and that would be nought
 Save for that curious interest,

that clings
 To earliest speech of him, who later sings ;

As what his earliest thought, and how express'd,
 Some fragments live, and this among the rest.

' The morning looks abroad, with visage pale
 On lofty hills that girt a spacious vale,
 Where countless flowers in gold and purple burned,
 As if the banished Eden had returned ;
 Unable to endure the lingering hours
 Of weary exile from her native bowers ;
 Had visited again,

her ancient seats,
 In all her garniture of fruits and sweets.

There trees displayed (in groups or straggling bands)
Bloom, and maturity of tropic lands,
Where close beside the fruit,

that bows with age,
The youthful blossom waits, like liveried page.

The fruitless tree, had beckoned to its side
The vintage vine, and now with seeming pride,
Lifted the purple groups,

and high in air
Tossed the dark children of its consort fair,

A little brook had left the fountain's rest,
That turned, and turned again, a lingering guest
By fragrant solitude,

as if it said
 "I ne'er shall see the like when I have sped."

Close by your feet, and far away was seen
Of varied-size, and shapes, smooth plats of green,
Bordered by shrubs,

that each its burden bore
Of fruits and sweets, till each could bear no more.

Seen here and there, along each level space,
A gentle swell rose upward like a vase
Loaded with flowers,

as if the hand of Art,
In Nature's careless work, had borne a part.

So lovely, and so tranquil it did seem,
You thought 'twas realized, that youthful dream
Of earthly paradise: and one would sigh

“I would not have these happy moments fly :
Let it be ever now,” and all too soon
The sweet-breathed morning changes to the noon,

The noon to eve,

too swiftly fades the light

To deeper shades, but bless the starry night.

And sure the hours should linger as they pass,

And Time amazed, forget to turn his glass.

"Here far from strife," the weary soul might say,

Shall life's last ebbing currents waste away;

Here will I rest

till my last sands have run,

And they who gather round shall say "'Tis done.'"

But hark, my soul, what adverse sounds are these,

That faintly come, yet thrill the passing breeze.

No tempest broods, nor clouds are seen on high,

The hills are shadowed 'gainst a smiling sky;

Yet still it comes,

a faint, low, muffled sound,

That sends a creeping shudder through the ground.

Listen again; it deepens to a roar

From either side, with sounds unheard before,

Of martial music;

'tis the hurried pace

Of armed nations to their trysting place.

The groves are mute. All that have wings have fled,

And Nature waits her doom with boding dread.

Is it the tumult shakes the trembling leaf?

Are dews upon the flowers, or drops of grief,

That they do hang their heads? See, far away

On yon dry tree, the bird of plumage gray,

And bending beak; when timid natures fly

From fields of carnage, instinct draws him nigh.

I.

They come, and from the northern height
Their arms are glancing in the light;
And on the southern side appears
The waving plumes and shining spears,
Scattered and few at first, but now
Thick masses hurry o'er each brow,
Rolling adown—the living tide,
Filling the vale from side to side,
Till looking o'er a narrow space,
They stand confronted face to face.

II.

In this grim gathering of our kind,
One conscious feature strikes the mind,
That wakes the thought "they are insane;"
Repelled—suspicion comes again.

The leaders in each vast array,
Are girded as for festal day,
And they who follow, all are dressed
As for a bridal, in their best.

Some on their bonnets jewels bear,
And costly scarfs on mantles wear,
With beautiful devices fraught,
That white and slender fingers wrought
In hall or bower far away,
And decked them for their dying day.

III.

The others humbler tokens wear,
As ribbons, or a braid of hair.

Streamers of needle-work do dance
From every spear and slender lance;
And horses' necks are decked with shells,
And little tiny, tinkling bells.

'Tis clear they're mad; he who would doubt,
His brains are scooped completely out,
And swept and garnished is the cell
Where seven idiots come to dwell.

Is this a place (where furies frown)
To sport the whimsies of the clown?
Or place for shame and gloomy fears,
A time for sackcloth and for tears?

Yet there is something in the heart,
That almost in their work takes part.

Is it a sympathy with sin
That stirs these wild desires within?
Or for the terribly sublime,
A love that will not yield to crime?

Where moral creature keeps high day,
Not all of grandeur will away
Though it be sinful and malign;
As if a contest with Divine
Made evil glorious in defeat,
And sin a boaster in retreat.

IV.

Twice sixty thousand scarce exceeds
The number of the trained steeds
Assembled in this vast array,
To mingle in the coming fray.

What awful pathos in the thought,
That some mysterious power hath taught

These graceful creatures, strong and grand,
To wait the rider's voice and hand;
Yield his to fallen creature's will,
And share his fortunes, good or ill.

V.

Rising conspicuous o'er them all,
One steed magnificent and tall,
His color white and olive blent,
Suggestive of the Arab's tent;
His head tossed near his rider's face
With such inimitable grace,
He seemeth of another race.

His ears that vibrate to a breath,
Seem listening for the step of Death;
His nostrils spread, and flashing eyes
The fast approaching shade defies.

I'd struggle there with none to save,
Alone upon a midnight wave;
Or scale the cloud where thunders crash,
And front the lightning's fiery flash,
If when my breath and pulses cease,
I could but see his face in peace,
Who moulded with his wondrous hand,
Beauty so passionate and grand.

VI.

Why falter they? What is the cause
Of this long, silent, breathless pause?
A stillness that so widely reigns,
They hear the blood course in their veins,

And start as if a serpent stings,
When far a breaking bow-string rings.

Is it the dread of "Dust to dust?"
The law that reigns o'er all, and must,
Whether they fall on battle-day,
Or waste by sickness' slow decay.

Or does the soul in horror shrink,
With foot half o'er the dizzy brink,
And of its future fate despond,
From something that it sees beyond?

VII.

Hark! tremulous, and thrice repeated.
It was an eagle's scream that greeted
Her absent mate; on mountain's crest,
The mother bird is by her nest.

And now 'tis answered loud and shrill
From that gray watcher on the hill.

He screams again, the impatient bird,
And now the trumpet's voice is heard;
And breaks along the inner verge
Of either host, the living surge,
While deeper ranks in stillness lay,
Save where the javelins fall like spray;
Or arrows hissing overhead
Fall far beyond, and souls are sped.

VIII.

Wilder the billows heave and toss
Along their fronts the vale across,
And grows the stream from side to side,
More agitated and more wide.

For where the serried spearmen pass
In close array, they stir the mass,
Or where the horsemen charge, and reel—
Borne backward by a wall of steel ;
But rallying with a fiercer charge,
Break through and make an opening large ;
There wilder yet the tumult grows,
Where'er each furious current flows.

Hours pass: and now the upward sun
Half his ascending course hath run,
And none are idle—ev'ry hand
Darts the swift lance, or wields the brand.

IX.

But who is this with haughty mien,
Who comes so silent, and unseen,
And takes his station by our side,
With such superior, careless pride.

His lofty brow with power is fraught,
And furrowed deep with care and thought.

The shades of grief his visage bears,
Or 'tis the gloom the student wears,
And passions fierce, or wasting tears
Have done the work of twice his years.
His is a face not soon forgot,
But yet, but yet, I like him not.

X.

The thin lips curl to mocking sneer
Emotions stir of rage and fear.

The eyes so passionless and bright,
Without one spark of feeling's light ;

Whence all but Intellect has fled,
Say, "Sympathy with man is dead."

On closer view, he seems like one.
Who long with hope and fear hath done :
Whom shaggy terrors ne'er could fright,
Nor plaintive sorrow dim his sight.

'Tis what they call a "Withered heart ;"
I would we were a league apart :
Or is this one of Fancy's freaks
This deep disgust—but hark ! he speaks.

XI.

"Friend, why this strange regard on me :
Is not the exhibition free ?
Old Madam Rumor rang her bell
Three days ago the news to tell ;
'There'll be enacted in this vale
The comedy called 'Red and Pale,'
Art thou a poet of that vein
That revels in heroic strain
So much applauded by the schools ?
If so, betake thee to thy tools.

Thy business is in good demand,
A heavy order's come to hand ;
For of these heroes, ev'ry name
Is worthy of eternal fame.

Five hundred thousand epics writ
At midnight, when the goblins flit
Like moths around the flick'ring light ;
Are needed to describe the fight.

XII.

But sir, permit me to suggest
The mode that strikes me as the best
Don't make your heroes all the straightest,
Nor all the strongest, bravest, greatest.
For though the world is sore obtuse,
And slow to comprehend abuse ;
A flash of inspiration may
Break through on some unlucky day,
And it will, pondering ask its mother,
How 'Each was greater than the other.'

XIII.

When falls your hero on the ground,
See that he makes the hills resound,
And gives the earth a crimson drench,
Before you put him in the trench ;
To which, in spite of soft appeals,
You'll drag his body by the heels,
No matter if Miss Maud expires ;
Sufficient, glory so requires.

Now, when you come to sketch this part,
You'll best call in the painter's art,
And limn him when with grief profound,
His bearers swing him round and round ;
Like a deceased cat, or bitch,
To throw his body in the ditch.

XIV.

Behold how pleasant 'tis to see
A band of brethren agree.

'Tis like the ointment that ran down
On Aaron's beard, and reached the ground.

What fond embraces when they meet ;
How lovingly the brethren greet.

'Art thou in health my brother? feel
In thy fond heart this loving steel.'

Then both lie down, and when they rise
Go arm in arm to paradise :
Where all is bustle to prepare
Reception for the strangers fair ;
And where to welcome them, no doubt
The high bred seraphs sally out,
Attracted by the fragrant mud,
A sort of mortar mixed with blood,
With which each one hath decked the other,
The 'soft impeachment' of his brother.

And envious youngsters half explode
To see these fashions, *a la mode*,
And pace the streets with drum and fife
Aspiring to a soldier's life.

XV.

There goes a ribbon—pink is low ;
Alas for pink ; why did he go ?

If he had lived but till to-morrow,
He'd saved the world, a world of sorrow.

That thing that streamed his crest above,
Was given by his lady love ;
A token for her soldier brave,
And was his passport to the grave.

Her lovers numbering a score,
Have each one gone that way before.

XVI.

Beyond that height where vapors sail,
Half hidden by its misty veil
She dwells ; and thither yestermorn
I hied, and asked her for her scorn.

I told her that her love was fate,
And pleaded wildly for her hate.
I kneeled and said I would not stir,
Till blest, I was abhorred by her.

At first, she heard me with surprise,
Then anger sparkled in her eyes
At If thou givest me hopes to wed
I am a man as good as dead.

I told her that her form and face
Was equally devoid of grace.

That Heaven itself ne'er had a right
To shock the sense with such a fright.

That outraged men should meet in flocks
And put Dame Nature in the stocks
For this, thy youth ; but when thou'rt old,
O dear, the half cannot be told.

The very beasts will stop, and grin
To hear thy rattling bones within
Thy wither'd, sun-dried, folded skin
That hangs about thee like a bag ;
A shriveled, toothless, gibbering hag.

Pray Heaven thou may'st not live till age,
I said, and left her, dumb with rage.

XVII.

Lo! green and yellow bites the dust;

His soul is with the Saints, we trust.

Some say his race of noble blood
Can be traced backward to the Flood.

Others aver his household name
Came in with Nimrod when he came ;
But he was exiled from his line,
For marrying one who milked the kine.

His kindred met the lowly born
With bitter taunts, and haughty scorn ;
While she revengeful, in a trice
Fixed on his banner this device.

A mountain cat, beset with curs,
Lies stretched at length, and softly purrs ;
Regardless of their furious yelps,
Is coolly suckling her whelps :
And just between her two fore paws
This motto's writ : ' Beware the claws.'

XVIII.

See'st thou that man of stature low,
That horizontally did grow ?
Whose breadth is equal to his length,
And indicates superior strength.

Whose legs bow out on either side
Like segments of a circle wide ?

Whose arms like wind-mills smite the air ;
Grim, shaggy as a polar bear ;
But ten times fiercer than the bruin,
Is working such prodigious ruin ?

XIX.

There was (as happens oft on earth)
A tender romance in his birth.

His father's sire a crown did wear,
His son, (the kingdom's only heir,)
Did stoop his princely mind so low
As love a captive Esquimaux,

Which when the king, his father, heard,
He sent a eunuch back with word,
That 'ere the chimes of midnight struck,
We'll drown your mistress—Eider Duck.'

The prince he strook his sabre sheath,
And mutter'd through his clenched teeth,
'If course of true love in the past
Hath ne'er run smooth—it shall run fast.'

He said, and brought with his own hand,
The fleetest camel of his band
And swung the lady to the rump,
Himself sprang lightly to the hump,
And clapping spurs in fiery haste,
They stood ere morn before the praste ;
Who bound them in those silken ties
That lasts till one or other dies.

Now in due time (the praste attesting)
She grew uncommon interesting,
In consequence of which, one morn
About daylight our friend was born ;
And seemed he such a proper child,
The king himself was reconciled.

XX.

He's ambidexter, both alike
Of those strong hands can thrust or strike
His man, with such fastidious skill,
He's dead before he knows he's ill.

What fine perception! perfect taste!
What cool dispatch, outstripping haste.

If merit had its just reward
The world would place with one accord,
Of all the names alive or dead,
His name at his profession's head.

See! how below his quarry's chin,
His blade glides through, nor moves the skin,
But leaves the head and neck and face
Precisely in their wonted place.

XXI.

And then you will observe again
How Heaven's first law doth round him reign
Of order timing every blow.

Nothing too fast, nor yet too slow;
Still keeping with exactness great
Five men beheaded, standing straight.
And cares not to increase his store
Until the first one topples o'er.

As the skilled Juggler tossing balls,
Throws this one up, ere that one falls,
So he, whom nought disturbs or plagues,
Keeps his full number on their legs,

And see, Miss Juliette, O dear!
The other hand that holds the spear;

With what a gallant fancy fine
 He brings that trio in a line,
 Strings them like beads upon his lance,
 And holds them up to see them dance.

XXII.

If a dull Turk should have a harem,
 Should *he* not have a harem scarem?

Ye Misses all, black, brown, and white,
 Fly to his arms with soft delight,
 And fond your silken tresses rest
 There on the Hero's manly breast.

Too late—come back; 'tis true; 'tis hard;
 Remorseless Fate sends in his card
 And asks, what sure before he knew,
 A 'confidential interview.'

Did he not in the twilight hear
 That dirge-like music warn his ear?
 And felt and saw with sore displeasure,
 The fatal Gorgon take his measure,
 And weave from out the thunder cloud
 The texture of his sable shroud,
 And laugh, and shake the horrid tresses,
 That round her forehead writhe with hisses?
 'Tis done—that steel-like lightning flew,
 And Bandy Legs is sheared in two.

'Who killed Prince Myrtle? killed him who?'
 Is't echo says who, who, who, who?
 Or does the staring bird of fate
 Sing back the refrain to his mate?

'Who killed Prince Myrtle?' once again;
 'Alander did it;' 'Who will reign?

How dared Alander kill the heir
Apparent, with his bright red hair?
'Tis matter for a great surprise,"
Why sir, the thing was on this wise.

XIII.

Alander's wife, Duke Ivan's daughter,
Who had an itching ear for slaughter,
Had heard in hall, and heard in street,
The wand'ring troubadours repeat
The stories that the voice of fame
Had coupled with Prince Myrtle's name;
And sung his praise on the guitar,
And called him chivalry's bright star,
Till the sweet lady pensive grew,
And sighed for one so stout and true.

He did sometimes, (they loved to tell,)
Quarter his man before he fell
By swift blow downward, then a toss,
And then a skillful stroke across;
He would the nicest butcher beat,
And leave him standing on his feet.

XXIV.

'Sometimes'—they said, 'he'd skin his foe
As quick as thought from top to toe,
And leave him blushing like a lout,
Or turn another inside out.'

And still as they rehearsed each tale,
Her fading cheek grew wan and pale.
Slower her step from day to day,
And she was wasting fast away;

Yet told her cankering grief to none,
But walked and wept, and sighed alone,
Hiding her grief from mortal sight,
Till one unlucky, fatal night,
When she was wrapt in slumber deep,
She breathed 'Prince Myrtle' in her sleep.

XXV.

Now when her lord this name did hear,
He started and pricked up his ear—
Hoped 't was a dream, but writhed with pain,
When softly came that word again,
Coupled with epithets so sweet,
As if she pleaded at his feet :
Told him it was through force she wed
One that she ever wished was dead.
Offering to make her husband quaff
Some drug so foul 't would take him off ;
If 't was not severed,—their relation—
By some 'mysterious dispensation.'

XXVI.

Then changed her tone ; and loud and clear,
Railed against destiny severe ;
And wrung her hands, and curs'd her fate,
With such a furious ribald hate,
Alander started from his bed,
With horror bristling round his head.

At morn he met his wife alone,
Told her, her guilty love was known,
And swore her paramour should die ;
At which she smiled and wiped her eye,

And vowed to give her heart and hand
To him who proved the better man.

An odd thought sir, occurs to me ;
Devils agree to disagree,
And rav'nous bird, and savage beast,
Do murder to provide a feast ;
But these more brutal, thousands kill,
The world with pestilence to fill ;
Or tired with murder, they must toil
To hide the plague beneath the soil.

O for a law without appeal ;
Signed with the Mede's and Persian's seal,
When one host is by victory blest,
And half the world hath killed the rest.
That part who do their breath retain,
Shall gather there and eat the slain.

Scourged to the banquet, when the trench
Is loathsome with the rotting stench,
And hear this voice where vultures flap,
'Uncover, murdering dogs, and lap.'

XXVII.

Horror of horrors ! who can hear
This villain rail ? away with fear !
"Thou wretch," I said, but scarce began
When he retorted "softly man ;
If thou and I should join in brawl,
And one by other one should fall,
Our pious neighbors there below,
Would take the living man in tow,
To where those reeking winrows lie,
And hang him on a gallows high ;

With this inscription written there,
'Where is thy brother Abel—where?'

XXVIII.

But hath the world so toned and drilled
Thy heart, that 't is with wonder filled,
And admiration of their deeds?
Or is't a heart with pity bleeds,
And softly chides, while I forlorn
Feel naught but deep contempt and scorn?

For weary days their councils sate,
On either side, in grave debate.
Those ancient men,—from every face,
The beard hung to the girdle's place;
And gaping crowds looked on each sage,
As wisdom incarnated age.

XXIX.

They in the scale each feather weighed,
Doubted, approved, but still delayed;
Cool, cautious, circumspect and slow,
They would not guess the truth, but know
Whether this plan or that was best,
At last in this they came to rest;
And in this finished scheme exult,
And yonder is the grand result.

Could tigers in their famished ire,
Or maddened devils, drunk with fire,
Who find in riot wild their bliss,
Devise a scene more foul than this?
Where hate, and rage, and curses fell,
And shrieks and groans, astonish hell.

It may be music, sir, to you,
Excuse this difference, adieu."

XXX.

He's gone, the wretch, and I am glad.
His sneers would drive an angel mad.

If I were Hercules, I'd run
And lift him if he weighed a ton,
And send him whistling through the air,
Till he alighted sprawling there,
Where, in his own infernal clack,
"They are cutting up the meat to pack."

BOOK V.

A lurid vapor rises from the plain,
Where struggling thousands pour their blood like rain,
As if the earth and air would cast a shroud
In shame and horror o'er the maddened crowd.

The thin and misty exhalations red,
From the hot streams that stain their dying bed,
Color the groupings with a ghastly hue,
In which they wrestle like a phantom crew,
Till from the west, with slanting beams,

the sun

Looks on a famous battle lost and won.

Save yonder serried mass of spears that bide,
As sea-girt rock defies the assailing tide,
The assaults of thousands.

'gainst that living wall
Footmen are broke, and horsemen charge and fall.

A banner floats amid that doomed throng,
And toward the northern height slow drifts along,
As borne from side to side it seems to pass
Where fiercest waves assault the crumbling mass,
That wastes, and wastes:

and now the banner gray
Falls as the living fabric melts away.

As clouds pursued by wintry winds on high,
In broken fragments haste across the sky;
But overtaken in their panic flight,
Are broke again, dissolving from the sight.
So through the valley

 over heaps of dead,
And up the heights the human hunt is led.
Some think of home, and hopeful urge the race,
But overtaken, sink in death's embrace.

Others outstrip the foe, and live to tell
In after days how many fathers fell,
Husbands and lovers,
 youths and gray-haired men,
Were offered up that day in Moloch's den.

But now the conquerors begin to tire
As day, declining, lights his parting fire,
Yet still some reapers,
 each with space between,
Along the ways the scattered handfuls glean.

But see, midst horses riderless in flight,
That royal steed careering up the height.

It must be he, though colored strange and new,
From ear to fetlock in a crimson hue.

His form betrays him—never far or near
In the wide world, could wanderer find his peer
For grace and power.

 While others faint from fight,
He springs exhaustless as at morning light.

With high exalted head he pauses now,
High on the northern mountain's utmost brow,
And turns half round—how quick the picture grew.
A crimson sketch against the heaven's deep blue,

Spangled with stars.

Who formed that bold design,
And touched the canvas—lo, he was divine!

See, yonder fugitive approaches near,
In hope to win, but shrinks in sudden fear.

Saddle and bridle gone—it may not be,
His tyrants' chains are broke, and he is free
As clouds and winds, and far from battle-plain,
He'll spring exultingly, and toss his mane
On green savannahs where the zebras play
By tumbling water-falls, away, away.

There he who gave him life

will cleanse his stains,
With mists from cataracts and driving rains.

The day's last blush has faded from the sky,
And dews are falling where the fallen lie
In careless attitudes on "Honor's bed,"
And dying men are pillowed on the dead
From whence sad voices come,

where late was heard,
The breezes sighing, and the song of bird.

That feeble gasp from one too weak to moan
Is answered by some wretch's deeper groan.

There one, fast sinking in the arms of death,
Yields, with a long drawn sigh, his parting breath;
And now another sendeth forth a shriek,
That drives the color from the listener's cheek.

'Tis like he had by hardy force

repressed

His pain till agony had rent his breast.

Curses of rage, and pleadings low and faint,
The fretful cry, the querulous complaint;

With thousand nameless mutterings of woe,
 Now swelling high, now fitful, sinking low,
 Do tell this tale, (and who can think it less,)
 The world hath been enamored of distress;
 And here they pay their vows,

and this the choir

Hymning to misery ere they expire.

Slow pass the hours away, and now the moon
 Looks down in beauty from her cloudless noon;
 Contrasting fearfully her holy light
 With all that shocks the ear and pains the sight,
 Too much oppressed till all the senses reel,
 And through the dizzy brain illusions steal,
 And fearful fancies,

for it scarce can be

Real and tangible, what now we see.

Two shapes (unseen before) are moving there,
 Of vast proportions, towering in the air,
 Whose shades and substances are wide enlarged,
 Like clouds with gloom and threatening tempests charged.
 As when the storm, denouncing ere it fall,
 Throws o'er the landscape round a gloomy pall;
 So do these phantoms

cast a dreadful shade

O'er all the valley where the dead are laid.

In horrid amity they seem to go,
 One following still the other, fast or slow,
 But forced and fatal peace,

that must refrain

From strife, though concord were eternal pain.

For, ever and anon the foremost turns
And gazes back, with eye that hateful burns
Like fiery furnaces, their glances meet,
And flame is mixed with flame in fervent heat.

Yet strange to see,

that leading where she lists,
This faithful, following, keeps abhorred trysts.

Lo, through the veil of her that leads the way,
Flashes of light in quick succession play,
From fires that burn her tortured breast within,
And through the rifts reveal her name of "Sin;"
That she would hide,

but can not, for the flame
She feeds herself reveals her hateful name.

The other's bony hands are filled with darts,
And grim and terrible in all his parts
He scorns concealment base

and "I am Death"
He boastfully proclaims, with his own breath.

These two, detestable, together roam;
As careful husbandman at Harvest Home
Treads his own fields,

and counts the clustering sheaves;
So their ripe fruit lies thick as forest leaves.

"Tis finished," Sin exclaims; with cruel guile,
And Death applauds the boast with ghastly smile.

Welcome the morn, if morning light will chase
These shapes of horror to their native place;
Or purge the mind from these distressful dreams,
Or pierce their substance with his arrowy beams;
And so pervade

and occupy the spot,

That though they are—we'll think these things are not.

What, wouldst thou be so timid and unwise,
As have the real hidden from thine eyes?

Is it by such devices

poor and weak,

The storm-toss'd mariner doth safety seek?

Doth he forget the billows heaving high,
And pregnant clouds careering o'er the sky;
And dream of placid seas? or reef the sail,
Showing a smaller surface to the gale;
And send fresh stays aloft,

and bind them fast;

The strong "preventer" to the yard or mast.

When pressed by winds, the ship careens too low,
Or ocean buffets—reeling from the blow
She seems to pause, and tremble as in dread,
Doth he not feel? and when she lifts her head,
In gallant fashion, tossing back the spray,
And plunges on her wild untrodden way;
Is it by vigilance,

or dreaming fond

He gains the peaceful bay that lies beyond?

Here, once the Minstrels rested thro' the night,
And Music's daughters waked with morning light;
Now, 'tis reversed;

like house of ill repute,

The night was vocal, but the morning mute,
Save scattering groans, that break abrupt and harsh,
Or near, or far, like voices from the marsh.

If truant angel, wandering from his sphere,
Or haply driven by adverse currents here;
Looked on these prostrate men, with blood defiled:

Men mixed with beasts, in heaps and winrows piled,
Would he not say—

when told that "This was fame,"

In horror asking—"Where then dwelleth shame?"

Along the battle's edge, these scores of dead,
Are babes asleep on "honor's truckle-bed,"
Compared to yonder acres of the slain,
Where darts and javelins fell like drops of rain,
And swords quick glancing, rent the human veil,
And where the mutilated corpses pale,
Or smeared with dust and blood,

lie stretched along,

An indiscriminate, and ghastly throng.

And when so full the couch would hold no more,
A cloud of cavalry went sweeping o'er
That mortal pavement, with their iron tread,
And disemboweled, crushed, and stript the dead,
Leaving a piteous

glory ready then,

For the historian's, and poet's pen.

Some on their faces lay, some fell asleep
On hands and knees as little children creep,
Or back to earth, from youth

to grey-haired sire,

Enwreathed and twisted in confusion dire.

Tho' half-concealed from view, the brooklet's course,
Can be detected from its shady source,
Down to its exit through the rifted hill
By lines of dead, that crook, and follow still
Its winding path,

if 'tis a gentle curve,

Or round some angle sweeps, with sudden swerve.

Impelled by thirst, they crept from either side,
And there, with heads together, drank and died.

Some faces are immersed, some lips just kiss
The water's surface, some too feeble, miss,
They reach the margin of the brook,
and there

Gaze down upon the wave with glassy stare.

Midst the chaotic masses, heaped and strown,
Some laughing devil flung, or chance hath thrown
Corpses in shapes

so horribly malign,
Their frozen attitudes seem like design.

Two troops of cavalry careering fast,
Have—where their edges met, a ridge upcast;
And there a rearing steed, half vaulting o'er
A heap of dead, stands upright as before;

His neck half-severed by a downward
blow
Is hanging by the throat, and drooping low.

His rider keeps the saddle, and retains
In either hand the sword and bridle reins,
And leaning back stares toward the distant height,
As if the body watched the spirit's flight.

South from this monument a little space,
A youth and veteran lie face to face.

One hand of either grasps the other's vest,
The sword of each is through the other's breast.

Grey, in the veteran's curling locks are mixt,
The scowl of battle on his brow is fixt.

His lips wide parted—writhe,
as if they curst
The fair haired boy, and killed his spirit first.

Darkened his visage when he met his fate.

The brows are slightly raised; the mouth below,
And clenched teeth, a smiling firmness show;
As if his fortitude refused to yield
To death, or mortal hate, on his last field.

The wristlet bands

in clotted fragments stray,

And from his breast the braid is rent away.

His bonnet bears a leader's silver star
And sable plume, conspicuous from afar
By friends and enemies: one stiffened hand
Yet grasps a banner staff, and one the brand.

The banner grey,

bath some device of blue

Graven in needle-work half hid from view.

Approach, and raise it up ; once, moved with fear,
Prudence had said “ Be not too curious here ;”
For hardy he who dared to

rouse his ire,

Ere death had touched his heart, and quenched his fire.

He cares not now for violence, or fraud,
Unclasp his hand, and shake its folds abroad.

See, from the staff a costly fabric falls,
As wrought by royal dames in kingly halls.

To waiting soldier,

sketched on field of grey,

A woman gives a sword, and points away.

How awful is the world, there beauty guides
The dance of death, and as a queen presides
Above his revels rude.

What doth it here,

A woman's picture in this place of fear?

There let it fall, and shroud the soldier o'er
In dark decay : no hand shall lift it more.

"Had human strength availed" what saidst it, hist!
A something shadowy floateth by, like mist,
Obscure, and formless ; hark ! "He could redeem
That promise made, to 'falsify the dream,'
The fair haired sister,

pale and trembling told,
How in her slumber she had seen them cold.

If thou wouldst know, let this red rampart tell
With what fierce energy, how long and well,
When they were girt with foes, the father there,
Raged round his darlings like a chafed bear ;
'Till gliding 'neath his arm, unseen, the lance
Sent through his brain the reeling, dizzy trance ;
And home, and love,

and plighted faith forgot,
They heard the yell of triumph, and were not."

"Curst be the hand that dealt that fatal thrust,
That pierced his heart." "Be still ; that hand is dust:
Its owner nothing now ;

behold how low
His head was riven by the vengeful blow.

His children, when at play, will sudden pause,
And gaze on vacancy, and ask the cause
Why he who up the hill so often bore
His tired little ones, doth come no more."

O curse him not,
the poor unconscious clod,
But leave him to the mercy of his God.

A costly offering ambition laid

On Moloch's altar, where these wrecks were made.

Where wait their Lemans dear,

What hearts will thrill,

What home the cypress wear, by stream, or hill?

Are they but shallow souls, that grieve awhile,

But borne by time to distance, learn to smile?

Or hath deep natures,

lavished all their store

In these wreck'd barques, and baffled—"Never more."

How fare the desolate? We fain would go

And watch their changing moods—how shall we know?

Will they who teach the unletter'd soul to sing?

Who haunt the groves where mystic waters spring,

And wake such melody, that clouds in haste

To pour their treasures on the parchèd waste,

Will pause for hours

in their onward race,

And linger dreamily above the place.

Who, when the soul exclaims "I would 'twere done;

'There is no profit here beneath the sun.'

These simple strains of mine will ne'er abide,"

Do shake the threat'ning finger, frown and chide.

"The ocean's barriers of rock,"

they say,

"Shall, like the mists of morning, fade away.

The Deep himself, amazed, shall fast retire,

When the old Earth puts on her wreaths of fire:

Yea, rise and float in steamy clouds on high,

And leave his mighty cauldron scorched and dry:

But these light airy fancies

that we give,

Shall mock at Ages, and forever live.

Nor distant years shall bid these thoughts "Farewell,"
Nor far—far hour shall hear their passing knell.

If they would go before, and deftly steal
The things to come, and silently reveal

A panorama of the place of tears—

Of hope deferred, of darkly gathering fears,

That makes the heart grow sick,

if they would tell,

I'm sure their votary would love them well.

Hark! tiny waterfalls are in the blood,

With all the voices of the mightier flood,

And sounds are mingling with its murmurs sweet,

Like measured syllables and trampling feet:

Yes! 'tis their footsteps

sounding in the soul,

And something rises! 'tis a pictured roll.

Approaching storms and night, together cast

A sullen gloom around a landscape vast,

Of plain and wood:

and mist-crowned mountains rise,

Like altars lifting incense to the skies.

One ridge immense, that seems with heaven to cope,

Falls from the East with long descending slope,

To meet the plain, then from its western verge,

Another rises like a fabled surge,

On which the 'wildered eye doth often lag,

In its ascent from curling crag to crag;

Till far above, the final terrace cleared,

It rests upon the summit, wild and weird;

That seems to reel amid the shadows dread

Of counter currents, striving round its head;

And crossed by vapors,

staggers in its flight,

Like crowned ambition, dizzy with its height.

There, where it verges from a northern line,
And eastward turns ; baffling the hand divine,
Like some proud courser, swerving from the rein,
The huge upheaval, has been cleft in twain,
And through the rifted chasm,

dark and deep,

A river plunges with impetuous sweep.

Abrupt its course, and fast the waters fly,
Adown their path, but pause, and bound on high,
Where rocks, like cottages, obstruct their bed ;
Jarred down by freshets from the cliffs o'erhead,
Or, vexed with noise,

they dropped them through the air,

These massive pebbles that they well could spare.

From out that avenue, that erst was made
By some strong angel's swift descending blade,
The prisoned river springs with outward bound
Five hundred feet, to reach a gulf profound ;
From whence descending

to a wooded bay,

It southward turns, and calmly glides away.

Half up the eastern height that fronts the gap,
A dwelling nestles in the mountain's lap.

Not poor the occupants, nor "idly great,"
If we may judge them by their outward state,
But hold that middle point,

from whence (say some)

Real nobility doth mostly come.

"Few from dull penury ascend the hill,
Of fortune's sickly minions—fewer still."

Nor cot, nor castle's turret rises there,
But a stone structure of an ancient air,
Where many generations lived and died,
With raised verandas running on each side ;
Supported from beneath

by pillar'd blocks

Of dark grey granite, quarried from the rocks.
At either end a spacious wing is seen,
The doors and windows canopied with green.

A watch-dog huge, of contemplative mien,
And air responsible, sits on the green,
Watching the herds,

lest some forgetful kine,

Should cross the boundary that guards the vine.

Below the house a graded road doth pass,
That seldom traveled, is o'ergrown with grass ;
But it hath been with such precision lined,
And slightly raised, the vein is well defined
Through straggling groves,

and over dancing rills,

Far to the bosom of the northern hills,

Here turning to the south, the searching eye
Is baffled by a ridge, nor broad, nor high—
That seems to fancy's view, a grave-like mound,
Where giant old a sepulchre hath found ;
With shaggy mountain

rear'd to mark his head ;

His feet just reaching to the river's bed.

South from the dwelling, twice an arrow's flight,

Where heaves the road to travel o'er the height,
And where that corse (if corse it is)

was laid,

There standeth two, a matron and a maid.

The elder of the two, hath gone beyond
Her early beauty ; but the lover fond
Would scarce regret that time—changing his scheme,
Like ripened artist, touched his early dream
With sober shades ; who cared not to erase,
But give to sprightly youth a higher grace,
That would awake this thought in him who saw,
“ A noble woman, in herself a law ;
A mother wisely fond, a loving wife,
And brave companion for the voyage of life.
Who findeth thee, hath heaven's mercy found,
And well may say when standing on life's bound,
To see thee pass,

and ere the curtain fell ;

‘ To thee and hope at once, farewell, farewell ! ’ ”

The other's face is very fair to see,
With form most graceful, and with gestures free.
But hers a beauty solemn

and severe

That seems impressed by nature's aspect here.

Scarce fifteen summers o'er her head have passed,
And all have flitted lightly but the last ;
Yet these vast types

have written something now

Of their wild grandeur on her cheek and brow.

While yet a child, her senses did begin
To sketch these rugged scenes, and pass them in ;

Pictures of woods—

of towering rock and storm,
Till 'tis developed in her outward form.

Those dark brown ringlets that conceal her neck,
And do her forehead half conceal, and deck ;
Are much like some we've seen—

thou knowest where.

“Within that fearful circle?” “Yes, 't was there.”

There lie the three, enthralled by potent spell,
For whom these wait, how vainly, time will tell,

Three days ago, a weary soldier crossed
Their hill domain, and told of battle lost ;
And others since,

Who passed in haste along,
But paused for food, did sing the raven's song.

And now they vacillate 'twixt hope and fear,
As evening's shadows settle dim and drear
Along the distant path, where if a bough
Is lifted by the wind, “They're coming now,”
Delusive Hope exclaims,

as fond—they see
Resemblance of the loved in shrub or tree.

As deeper darkness hides the things below,
Squadrons of clouds are hast'ing to and fro,
Like troops that join the host. They summoned, run,
And loud and frequent booms the signal gun
As notes of preparation

in the sky,
For some grand revelry to be on high.

While day is vanquished, and in full retreat,
The Ethiopian comes to take her seat,

And tempests will array

old Chaos's queen

In robes so black, the like was seldom seen.

They have obscured her usual starry crown,
But pour bright jewels on her vesture down ;
And chains so glittering they light the gorge
Where leaps the stream, like flame from Vulcan's forge.
So that the maiden

hath forgot the three,

And loud exclaims, " O mother, mother, see !"

Both gaze a moment where the wild fires burn,
Then with a long drawn sigh, they homeward turn.

See, as we follow in their footsteps slow,
How darkness alternates with lurid glow.

Night comes, and hides them

with her mantle black,

Then fierce-eyed lightnings drive the shadows back.

'Tis fit the elements should gather round
In dark habiliments, with moaning sound,
And flash their torches full

in each fair face,

'Tis grandly suited to the time and place.

For they, like vessels slightly built, and frail,
But deeply laden, that have spread the sail
On dangerous sea,

are drifting to a shore

From whence the mariner comes back no more.

But now the storm puts on a darker frown,
With sweeping gust, and drops of rain come down,
Giving the loiterers

a sharp reproof

To hurry forward to the sheltering roof.

The door is open at the southern side,
Where waxen tapers light a passage wide
That serves for armory

and entrance-hall,
With arms and armor, pendent from the wall.

Here to the right is seen a broken brand,
That failed, in some dread hour, its owner's hand.

A cloven helmet, and a coat of mail
Of curious workmanship, like fishes' scale,
Plundered from some Goliath

of his race,
Hang both together in conspicuous place.

The plaited coat of mail—two folding leaves,
Worn by the "Man at Arms;" with gloves and greaves,
That have been once

some soldier's treacherous trust,
Are here with implements to strike and thrust.

The long straight sword, hangs close beside its neighbor,
The crooked, garnished blade, or horseman's sabre.

The short broad weapon, for the "*Coup de Grace*,"
With dagger, active in the close embrace,
Are hanging by the belt,

or handle near
To many a slender lance, and stouter spear.
One lance, (the spoil of battle,) is encased
In gold and ivory, and richly chased
With quaint devices, from the point to heel;
And where it joins the socket of the steel,
A pennon is infixed, of fabric rare,
That sways and trembles in the fitful air;

As once, per chance, upon some field of death
It shook, and fluttered, in the war-horse's breath ;
Or when departing from his glen or hill,
The bearer said : " Farewell ;" it flutters still,
As through the open door

the night winds blow,

Though he who bore it once, is cold and low.

There, household banners wave and dinted shields
Are seen, the harvests of his hard-fought fields.

From prince and peasant were these trophies won—
From wide dissevered tribes of diverse tongue,
And all-together lead the mind away
To many a night, when, watching for the day,
The strong, fierce soldier, in his fields afar,
Had from his dewy couches seen the star—
The usher of the morn,

grow pale, and wan,

As day advanced, and hours of strife came on.

On either hand, the visitor descries
Through large and lofty rooms of equal size.
This to the right is meant,

or seems to be,

For friends' reception and for revelry.

Low cushioned stools, are marshal'd in a line,
And 'gainst the walls are couches to recline ;
And circling seats are 'round a table large
Of oblong shape, constructed like a barge
Of massive elegance,

and graceful strength,

With silver cups and goblets, ranged at length.

Beyond this point the tapers fail to fling
Their feeble light to reach the distant wing ;

But sliding panels

hide recesses deep,

But dimly seen, where weary guests may sleep.

The other, to the right where they retire,
Is lit by tapers, and a cheerful fire.

Here, finished taste, with busy hands adjust,
Without the nice precision that disgust,
And makes the stranger

angry with himself,

Lest he should jar a system from its shelf.

All hath an air of freedom, and restraint.
Easy to see, but difficult to paint,
As if the things inanimate

retreat

Each to its place, but hardly takes its seat.

A quiet air pervadeth ev'ry part,
Yet all seems ready for industrious art:

Frames for embroidery of fabrics rich,
And homlier looms are nestled in the niche.

Pencils for painting—rolls and parchment books,
Are here and there; and pendent from the hooks
Some mantles, hoods, and wimples, we behold,
With other garments of a rougher mold,
That long will hang,

ere reaching from the ground,
The owner's stiffened fingers take them down.

Against the open spaces on the wall,
Are scores of pencil sketches—large and small,
In sober coloring dressed,

and order neat,

Though some are fragmentary, some complete.

But if the groups are full, or seen in parts,
One figure life-like from the canvas starts,
So much like his we've seen in death's disguise,
We gaze, and wonder if the dead can rise,
And muse, and wonder if the husband's life
Can so o'ertask the being of the wife,
That he should seem like God,

when by her side,

And in her dreams o'er all the earth preside.

If 'tis a mountain scene the pencil lags
Till yon bold hunter bounds along the crags.

Are men for mastery striving in the ring,
That matchless wrestler doth his fellow fling;
Or, striving in the fight,

with fiercer wrath,

His circling weapon sweeps them from his path.

And there to him, who o'er it fondly bends,
The nursing child its little hand extends;
And there, again, the infant, and the rest—
A smiling group—are hanging on his breast,
Who every where pervades

the artist's dream,

And in her fond creations reigns supreme.

On two of these the eye would still remain,
Or if seduced away, turns back again
To linger there;

where many a lonely hour,

Hath passion dwelt with consummated power.

In one the care with which the pencil flings
Its lighter touches of minuter things,
Reveals how fondly one did bend above,
With memory quickened by her yearning love

For that dear spot where two hegiras meet;
 "Its paths familiar to her youthful feet;"
 And where her heart

forsook its early nest,
 And fluttered fondly to another's breast.

A long, low dwelling is begirt with elms
 That sweep the roof, and almost overwhelms
 (With slender drooping boughs

that interlace,)
 The windows, doors, and sides, in their embrace.

Close by the lattice, open to the air;
 So very close the hand may reach it there;
 The oriole, or nicer finch hath hung
 A soft, luxurious cradle for her young;
 And with sly cunning,

to her service pressed
 The wild and wandering winds to rock the nest.

Above the margin round with open beak
 The fledgelings gape; and there, with ruddy cheek,
 A child, with one plump hand

the branch doth pull,
 And with the other feeds the hungry full.

The parent bird regards with great alarm
 The injudicious nurse, and pecks her arm.

Below, a bee upon a business tour,
 Is seen half buried in a gorgeous flower;
 And there another turneth

round and round,
 Stowing its cargo for the homeward bound.

A feathery insect, sometimes called a "bird"
 By gentle courtesy, is almost heard.

So clear his colors—

poised (as we suppose)

On wing invisible, above the rose.

On that wide walk where Phœbus throws his light,
A shadow rests upon the gravel white,
Like swooping vulture

with his wings outspread,

And looking up we see him overhead.

The cackling brood, that by bereavements sore,
Have learned that dangers cast their shades before;
Fly fast to covert from the threatened doom:
All but the leader, that with glistening plume,
And blood red color

fastened to the fore,

Hath bravely mounted to the kennel door.

One fiery eye turned upward to the foe,
And neck outstretched, he on his trump doth blow
A shrill defiance, that would seem to say
In words as plain as such a creature may:
"Ho, caitiff, ho! what doest thou prowling there?
Hast made thy boast that thou wouldst eat the fair?
Thou liest in thy throat hard by thy tie,
And that I'd prove if thou wert not so high;
Forego thy vantage, to the lists descend,
To place accessible, and let thy friend
Show thee the difference,

thou plundering loon,

And he'll regard it as a special boon."

Walking where forest borders on the green,
A pair of lovers arm in arm are seen;
The one that manly form

so often shown,

And one in youthful beauty is her own.

An aged couple, crowned with locks of grey,
Stand 'neath the elms, and smilingly survey.

The other picture hanging by its side,
Doth represent a field where hosts have died,
And one heroic deed that hath been long
Rehearsed in story, and diffused in song;
Because that battle

with the flight begun

By single champion was "lost and won,"

Wide o'er the field of blood where men were flying
Not long ago, midst heaps of dead and dying,
And far beyond, along the distant height,
They seem to pause, arrested in their flight,
Pursuer and pursued,

and turn about,

As if their ears had caught a stirring shout.

The flying horseman checks his headlong speed,
And he who follows reineth up his steed.

The out-breathed footman yielding to his foe,
Nor heeds, nor feels th' anticipated blow
That hangs suspended,

as they look to where

That rescued banner flutters in the air.

On swarthy faces shame and rage are blent,
Like terror changing to a stern intent;
And lowering brows, where doubt and fear are past,
From every side are gathering far and fast
Around their leader ; who with outstretched hand,
And with impassioned gesture points the brand
To that bold form

that fixes every gaze,

And fills the victors' hearts with sore amaze.

A hill, the dull monotony relieves
Of the vast flat that circling, upward heaves;
Formed by the eddying

waters of the flood,
When oceans cleansed the giant sinner's blood.

Down this declivity one comes amain,
That he who sees would ever know again
Midst struggling thousands—and though dark and grim
From mists of battle, it is none but him,
So oft revealed,

where darkest terrors lower;
The hour hath found its man, the man his hour.

Falchions and spears that thousand deaths presage,
And furious faces, dark with scowling rage,
Are turned to him, who, guarded by no charm
Beside the prowess of his matchless arm,
In smiling confidence

still draws his breath
As if defying, and affronting death.

The royal standard, gone, and lost to view,
An hour ago, when wildest tumult grew,
He hath redeemed;

and fresh from fearful raid,
The blood is dripping from his hand and blade.

Behind him close, his courser (glossy black)
Faces the foe, retreating slowly back,
His armed hoofs rear'd threateningly on high,
And ruin leaping from his blazing eye.
They shrink from him,

as bushman shrinks in haste,
From some fierce tenant of the fiery waste.

Beyond the steed, there is a narrow lane,
 With living walls, but thickly paved with slain
 That strews his path—

 for swift his mission sped,
 Nor yet the quick hath rolled above the dead.

Up this red pathway, to its utmost bound,
 An agitated circle gathers round
 The dying chief;

 whose head a crown did deck,
 But now hangs drooping by his nerveless neck.

Some bear him up; some haste to bind a sash
 Around his forehead to conceal the gash
 Through which his spirit passed,

 made by that steel,
 That they who feel but once, no more can feel.

Thus as they pass (the conqueror's ebbing sands,)
 The other passes to the rallying bands,
 And while his foes are shrinking

 from his side,
 He bears the banner forth in lofty pride.

In all these pictures fair, the hand that drew
 Had skill peculiar to the gifted few;
 But here, with something far transcending art,
 The fond enthusiast hath poured her heart.

Below each sketch,
 the name "Ianthé" 's placed,
 In letters clear, but delicately traced.

Now pass the hours, and while the sands have run
 In yon night glass, till half their task is done,
 The maid hath sunk to sleep,

 and slumbering, seems

But woe for one whose heart can win no more,
But trembling sits beside its garnered store
Of all that life can give,

 when tempest tossed,
She sees her treasures wrecked and all is lost.

No sleep for her whose task is incomplete,
Though passing to and fro with hurried feet,
And busy hands, that yet will not refrain,
Though all is done, and all is done again ;
To still retouch,

 with care that brings relief,
As moments pass like sands, through straits of grief.

The lights are trimmed, though bright and clear the
flame,

Each spotless picture dusted in its frame ;
And now she turns, and on the blazing fire
Laden with fuel, piles the fuel higher :
Removes the snowy covering from the hoard
Of viands rich, and spreads again the board
The hundredth time,

 that first with care was spread
Three days ago, and waited for the dead ;

Steals to the couch where sunk the maid to rest,
And smoothes again the drapery on her breast.

How fair she is ! why doth the watcher stoop,
And o'er the sleeping maid, her eyelids droop
So long and still, as if her pulses stop'd ?
And were they tears that gather'd, shone, and dropt ?
Yes, they were tears,

 and she doth weeping trace
Appelles' lineaments in Dora's face,
His is the forehead arched, expansive, high ;

Brow that like rainbow spans the clouded eye ;
Nose slightly curved like eagle's bending beak ;
Lips that when mute, do eloquently speak
Of firmness, truthfulness,

and scorn of fraud ;

And his the chin that angels might applaud.

But all so proud that he who scans might say :
" If favoring winds do waft her on her way,
She'll be in after years

to few endeared,

A haughty creature, less beloved than feared.

But O, if mercy lights affliction's fires,
If friends are dead, and earthly hope expires ;
If pale with watching, eyes with weeping dim,
She gropes for God, and haply findeth him ;
Then one may say,

when she is in the sky,

A brighter spirit ne'er went up on high !

The storm is growing loud. A deaf'ning roar
Bursts like a torrent through the open door
When she peers out, as if from earth and air,
The spirit of the storm had gathered there
His vocal bands,

and all in black arrayed,

Their solemn voices joined the serenade.

As one familiar in her youth with tears,
Whose hair is early gray, but not with years,
Stepping at once from childhood,

past her prime,

So the young earth grew old before her time.

Now in her moods what awful notes she wakes,
And how her voice with gloomy passion shakes.

That swelling bass is startled by a toll,
 Followed by thunders' long, protracted roll,
 Broken at intervals by sudden shock,
 As lightning, darting downward, smites the rock;
 Or wrestling with the storm,

from mountain wall

The lofty giants of the forests fall.

How in the torrent's roar, and in the gale,
 Too conscious Nature pours her widowed wail,
 As if that voice,

resounding through the years,

"Curs'd be the earth," was ringing in her ears.

But now the hours outstrip the loitering tale,
 And gray-beard Time in his ascending scale
 Hath counted three,

and she who wakes doth feel

Through all her veins exhaustion's languor steal.

With open hand spread o'er her drooping brow,
 How worn and wearily she sitteth now.

But muttered words,
and fingers working fast,
 Reveal a mind too busy with the past.

By memory's aid she lives that evening o'er,
 When young Appelles lingered at the door
 Of her own cottage home—that eve he stayed
 Beyond his usual time, and still delayed;
 Oft rising to depart, yet still was there,
 Oft turned away, then came with shrinking air
 And stammering tongue,

that something, nothing told;

('Twas passing strange in one so proud and bold!)

And when at last his words revealed the cause

Why he was thus, her pulses seemed to pause,
Then wildly beat;

for gone her secret pain
Of hopeless passion nursed. "Beloved again!"

And when too soon the parting moment came,
How shook his voice that spoke her simple name,
And shook his hand,

that lightly touched her own,
And then it seemed her very life had flown.

That sleepless night, but happy—O how brief!
And how unlike these wasting hours of grief.

The dreamy morn, the day's sweet waking trance,
Her sisters' smiles, her mother's loving glance
Oft turned to her,

as if she now did stand
The reigning priestess midst the household band.

She well remembers now her father's pride,
When at the gathering of the country side
At Harvest Home, the panting courier came,
And thousands heard her absent lover's fame,
How through the breach

the "Hope Forlorn" he led,
And stormed the wall where veterans shrank in dread.

The smothered murmurs while he told the tale,
The long, loud cheers that rose upon the gale;
She hears them now,

and thinks how, stooping low,
She plucked the flower to hide the crimson glow.

And while to her, admiring eyes were turned,
And while her cheek with bashful pleasure burned,
The aged patriarch with years oppressed,
His long white beard descending to his breast;

His head alike with years and honors crowned,
 In youth for strength, in age for truth renowned ;
 Did to her side with courteous

air advance

And claim her hand to lead the coming dance.

And smiling, said "he would not be denied
 To dance one measure with Appelles' bride
 That was to be." And then the merry laugh
 When the old father threw away his staff,
 And sprang so lightly ;

they did much admire

How he could bound with all his youthful fire.

Now Caius' feats and Ion's infant ways,
 Strangely distinct come back from former days.

The earliest smile of each, when first they knew
 The hand that nursed, and when they older grew.
 The morn when Ion first to walk assayed,
 And from her side a fathom's journey strayed.

When Caius launched away,

(the floor his sea)

And high applauded, reached his father's knee.

Their calm repose at noon or eventide,
 Their boyish sports in field or forest wide,
 And later yet, when youth, in woodcraft versed,
 With glowing cheek its daring deeds rehearsed,
 And thousand incidents

on memory fixed,

Are now with fancy's darker pictures mixed.

Were "they who gathered round one hearth at night,"
 By tides of battle sundered in the fight?

Did Caius fall alone?

did Ion feel,

Swept from his father's side, the fatal steel?

Or in one group do sire and children lay,
So darkly changed, herself would turn away
With breaking heart,

and love refuse to keep
Its waking vigil o'er such ghastly sleep?

Her visage writhes as each changed face intrudes,
And comes suggestions of their attitudes
As they were thrown in battle's

stern turmoil,
And hints of horror drives her on to toil.

Slow breaks the morn when clouds obstruct its course,
And all day long the storm with voices hoarse
Rails on the light,

and pleads for darkness' reign.
Another night, and morning breaks again.

The sun ascending, nature's tears hath dried,
And mists are climbing up the mountain side,
When maids and matrons come

to tell and hear
Whate'er can minister to hope or fear.

For other homes are filled with boding dread,
Of all the spears Appelles' banner led
Adown the vale,

not one hath come to tell
If some yet live, or fallen, where they fell.

"But now," they said, "A wounded soldier found
O'erwhelmed with pain, with pools encircled round,
Who from the field with staggering steps assayed
To reach the hamlet where his children played;
That morn had died :

but ere his heart grew cold,

When questioned close, this tragic tale he told.

“ When broke our household clan, and fast in flight,
The few survivors climb'd the northern height,
I turned and looked. One serried phalanx lay
(Of all our shattered bands.) in close array.

That banner floated there, our leader's boast,
Its strange device, a watchword through the host.

To waiting soldier, stretched on field of grey,
A woman gives a sword, and points away.

That circling mass was girt with many foes,
That round its border pressed, with deadly close,
And glancing swords and spears,

Tossed the red spray around its troubled verge.

With hasty feet I gained the mountain's brow,
And turned again, and looked below, and now,
That girdling band of strife, the thrust and blow,
And wrestling men, had been contracted slow
To narrow ring, where waved the banner yet,
Not as 'twas seen before, securely set ;
But rudely shaken, swayed from side to side,
Its agitated texture reeling wide,
Or briefly poised aloft,

and now 'twas lost,
And now its fluttering folds were upward toss'd.

Again it fell, again on high 'twas flung,
But slowly drooping, still and listless hung
A little space,

then sinking down from view,
Was seen no more," 'twas all the dying knew.

The hearer's marked, and told for many a day,

How, white and still, Ianthe turned away,
When all was told : and when they sought to cheer,
She heeded not, nor heard, nor cared to hear ;
But with her silent musings dwelt alone,
With voice for others' griefs, but not her own.

BOOK VI.

Time counts the moments off, and to the past
Tosses the hours, till twice three moons are cast.

Now dull neglect is seen where order reigned,
As if the hands were palsied, and refrained
From fatal touch,

and in dejected mood
Stands sullen Apathy, where Hope once stood.

Through fields and vineyards fair, by stream and hill.
The flocks and herds untended, range at will.

The flowery province where distinct, apart,
The fragrant races dwelt, caressed by art,
Hath been subverted,

and the barbarous bands
Of weeds and thorns, possess their homes and lands.

What change hath come within, as through the door,
We pass again, where once we passed before?
The floor is stained,

the armor dark with rust,
The table, cups, and seats, begrimed with dust.

In this apartment where they daily dwell,
The god of war hath cast a deadlier spell
On its divinity ;

and here the soul
Hath loosed its humble subjects from control.

Old scraps of food bestrow the table bare ;
Dishes and stools are scattered here and there,
With soiled apparel thrown in disarray,
And spiders stretch their tapestries of grey
Across each nook. The garments on the wall,
Are bound together in a filmy thrall ;
And pendant from the ceiling overhead,
Are many a clumsy loop, and swollen thread,
The tattered fragments

of the spider's loom ;

That wave their dusty burdens in the gloom.

Some hand hath turned the picture frames about,
Their faces to the wall—their backs without,
As if they said : “farewell !” Close by the fire
A ghostly figure sits in loose attire
And stooping posture ;

still, as if transfixed,

And grey is with her straggling ringlets mixed.

Her hands are clasped before, her eyes look down
On smouldering embers growing cold and brown,
As pondering how

on altar of the heart

Love's fire goes out, and light and warmth depart.

Can this be she, that rising with the star
Of morning, “brought her merchandise from far ?”
Whose children “clothed in scarlet, called her bless'd ?”
Whose “husband praised, in silk and purple dress'd,”
“Conspicuous midst the Elders of the land ?”
Who to the needy stretched her ready hand,
And by the law of kindness,

still impelled,

Of all the “virtuous daughters, most excelled ?”

The mastiff stretched supine, his cares forgot,
 And nerveless grown of late, where hope is not,
 Oft rears his head, and while with languid air
 The maid industrious passes here, and there,
 The creature gifted with a strange instinct,
 By some mysterious tie to reason linked,
 Watches the two—now changed from former days,
 And seems to ask, with melancholy gaze :
 “Why are ye thus ?

what other ills impend ?”

Then sleeps again ; a poor, but honest friend.

Now Dora's cheek hath lost its crimson glow,
 The sunset flush hath faded from the snow,
 The lily droops, where late the rose did grow.

In man's extremity, when through the years
 Journeying along, he finds his “time for tears ;”
 It oft occurs that evening's earliest frown,
 The first faint shades that tinge the hills with brown,
 Fills him with boding dread.

and phantoms lower,
 That darkness' self dispels, at later hour.

Such prescience hovers here as day declines,
 Some voiceless prophet silently divines ;
 His burden “dust to dust,”

till vanquished light
 Hath left the field to predatory night.

Hours pass, and but the dog's long breathing breaks
 The silence of their flight, but now there wakes
 A voice from yonder room, 'tis here she seems
 With them to be conversing in her dreams ;
 And she who in her waking hours was dumb.

Hath found a voice in sleep: the three have come—
Her door swings wide,

and forth with hurried feet,
And agitated joy, she comes to greet.

See! by the taper's faint and wavering glow,
Each hand is clasped, each kissed in mimic show.

The dog alert, but still,
from where he lies
Watches the pantomime without surprise.

Accustomed to the scene, that oft before
Hath been at silent midnight acted o'er,
He hears the welcome, sees the fond embrace
Without alarm, or rising from his place :
Ponders the waking start,

the sighing deep,
And swift retreats, then sinks again to sleep.

Suns rise and set, and now these dreams have fled,
And darker visions hover round her bed.

There by her side
a menial seems to stand,
And wait obedient to her stern command.

“ Go search that field of Death—and search again,
Those places most where thickest lie the slain.

If thou dost find,
 thou'lt know them by a braid
Like these dark locks, across each bosom laid.

Take food from stores below, and wine to cheer,
And men to aid, and bring their bodies here."

They're coming now, and through the outer door
She hears the sound, and deems them borne by four
With measured tread,

and on the table nigh,

Placed side by side, their shrouded corpses lie.

How awful 'tis : she comes, there's nothing there
Where her white fingers smoothes the fancied hair.

No faces pale, where kisses fond resound,
Yet softly whispering, still she hovers round
" Appelles dear,

hast thou forgotten me ?

This wrinkle in the shroud, it must not be."

Now—Caius' ruffled robes her hands employ,
" How changed he is," and " Ion, O my boy."

Ten times the light o'er drowsy shades prevail ;
Ten times the dews descend, and dews exhale,
And 'tis her time to walk.

Why comes she not,
Is all her cares in deeper sleep forgot ?

No, 'tis her voice—not passionate, and fast,
And mixt with household names as in the past ;
But low and pleading.

Hark ! that name is heard
That fills eternity, and yet a word.

" Behold she prays." Yes, 'tis the voice of prayer ;
And veil thy face my soul, for God is there.

" Put off thy shoes "

with reverence profound,
The place whereon thou tread'st is holy ground."

Unheard the voice Divine, but her reply
Reveals the utterance of the Most High.

" Thy costly treasures, such as hope and love,
Thou shouldst have hoarded in the world above,
And to thy Father given thy

diamonds rare,

The Heaven's great garner, who could dim them there?

But lavished recklessly in man's abode,
Where moths corrupt, and cankering rusts corrode,
What could befall thy heart,

but that it must

See its frail structures leveled in the dust?"

"I know it, Father dear. Too much was given
To frail humanity; nor much to Heaven.

But O my Lord, if thou canst mercy give
The poor Idolater and bid her live;
Wilt thou not be more gracious yet,

and save

Her broken Idols, too, beyond the grave!"

"And did her prayer avail?" "We cannot tell;
She had the ear of God, and pleaded well,
'Tis all that man can know.

Presumptuous they

Who argue more than heavenly heralds say.

Yet sure it is, she was as one at rest
When morning broke: and Dora scarce repressed
Her glad surprise, when entering through the door,
She saw that face more bright than e'er before;
Nor future fears,

nor sorrow for the past,

Darkened her radiant visage to the last.

Slow "burned her candle out;" nor human art,
Nor Heaven's caress, restores the broken heart.

Sometimes, but rarely, in the storms of life,
When griefs too sharp assail, too fierce the strife,
And long continued,

from its fatal bay,

The soul its anchor lifts, and drifts away.

Her hour had come. The mountains laid aside
Their cloudy drapery that day she died,
Lifting their rugged summits, grey and bare,
Like heads uncovered, towering in the air,
As if when first

Creation's work was done,
Some winged creature laid each topmost stone.

As one regretful that her youth decays,
Clings to some fashion of her earlier days,
So Nature fond, those faded garments wore,
That drew the eyes of angels long before ;
When first that Word was spoke,

“ Let there be light,”
And shouting millions watched her circling flight.

But now, her lineaments severe, or mild,
Her gentle aspects, and her rudely wild,
Were all unheeded in that room of death,
That echoed to Ianthe's parting breath,
As one low sound

betwixt a sigh and groan
The stillness broke. and Dora was alone.

'Tis long since then ; but yonder where the turf
Heaves up in ridges, like the heaving surf,
Above the wrecks of men, thou'lt find the place
Where sleeps the dead of all Appelles' race.

Two graves are there,
a lettered stone at each ;
“ Ianthe,” “ Dora,” nothing more they teach.

Strange tales are told, that “in the twilight gloom,
Two white robed figures flit from room to room ;
And none who cometh, careth to retain
A long possession of that fair domain ;

But overshadowed by neglect

at last

Another wreck is added to the past."

A pause ensued when these last words were spoke,
Till Mary pondering, the silence broke.

"The Man of Uz' by God was justified,
And they rebuked, who piously denied
The seeming preference

to evil given,

And strange desertion of the good by Heaven.

No marvel 'tis, that Faith is sore distressed
When from the crowd, the purest and the best
Are singled out; as if some power malign,
Who hates the good, and baffles the divine
Called to his ruffian crew, 'See ye you soul,
Who holds his passions in such stern control
That thought itself

grown wayward, is repressed,

And in his native virtue seems to rest?

Go forth, assault, nor heed his prayer or moan:
Nor fight with small or great, save him alone.'

He, smitten, reels—cries out.

None heeds his call

He looks to Heaven, and Heaven is silent all.

Blow follows blow, till reeling, dizzy, faint,
The sharp-tongued echoes mock his last complaint.

Can he who sees, but think

'God hath forgot?'

Or he who feels but says 'He careth not?'

When angels contemplate their fellows' fall;
Their future doomed to sufferings that appall:
Or scan that episode with mystery rife,

The lengthened tragedy of human life,
Do doubts arise?

 and does the doubter say
Could the 'All Wise' not find some better way?
Or do their powers comprehensive, scan
The whole vast system, mostly hid from man,
And God's design

 and final purpose read?"
"Nay," said the Angel, "that were vain indeed.

How could a creature's puny mind embrace
A scheme that fills eternity and space?

When mortal art the starry fields explore,
As stronger telescope discovers more;
And all the old Astronomer can see,
But a suggestion is, of what may be.
So is the infinite design

 concealed,
And but the borders of his plan revealed.

The seraph, taught of God from long ago,
Learning, through periods that none may know;
Must walk by faith,

 as at his earliest hour,
And live as much o'ershadowed by his power.

Nor could the doubter live, if she who lost
Her mortal loves, turned pale away, and crossed
Death's sullen stream. How soon would they expire
Whose love celestial is a flame of fire,
If well believed,

 suspicion thus should speak :
'He whom thou worshipest, is false, and weak.'

Were Heaven itself, in fiery flashes wreathed,
And one survivor midst its ruins breathed,

That lonely one,

 would kneel upon the sod,
With trust unshaken as the throne of God.

But if suspicion backed by troops should come,
And urge its arguments till faith was dumb;
'Farewell to hope and life,'

 that soul would sigh,
And, lost his love, would broken-hearted die."

"'Tis strange," she said, "That love should so endure
In men, midst passions selfish, and impure.
And some explain his presence

 on the earth
By tales improbable, that move to mirth.

When our first parents were expelled for sin,
From Eden's blissful seats, love was shut in:
And like deserted child began to grieve,
Ran to and fro and shouted: "Eva, Eve;
Where art thou Eva?

 gone—alack, alack;
I'll search the world but that I'll bring her back."

He ran towards the gate with hurried springs;
(He could not fly, for Eve had clipt his wings)
But paused abrupt,

 and said: "if I can pass
Yon giant sentinel, 'tis doubt, alas.
I'd give him battle, but 'twixt me and you,
To fight against such odds will never do.

Defeat were certain. But am I so slight?"
He frowned, and drew himself to his full height,
Something below a cubit

 and a span,
According to the measure of a man.

"The first four miles, I'll ascertain my length,
And by the total calculate my strength.

But how," he said, with thoughtful,

knotted brow,

"Can this be done? aha! I have it now!"

And settling to an attitude profound;

His feet wide parted, looking sternly round;

As if he said "Who doubts will come to harm:"

With right forefinger laid in his left palm.

"Of solid bodies," he said, "every one

That comes between its mother earth, and sun,

Will throw a shadow

equal in extent

Of length and breadth, to that from which 'twas sent.

Of course it will, To doubt is "in my eye;"

And thence the proverb, "Figures never lie."

Well then, what is it? why—

it comes to pass

I'll find my altitude down on the grass:

But how is this? the sun is right above,

And winks a warning, "stand from under, love,

Or on your head

some beams of mine will fall;"

Now where's my shadow? 'tis no where at all.

I have no shadow, and I'm much afraid

My greedy substance has devoured its shade.

This 'minds me of a story told by Eve.

But then, she might be laughing in her sleeve.

"Once," she averred,

"There was a curious elf,

That when pursued would swallow down himself."

Down fell the glittering

 weapon at the word,

And all unhurt he passed the flaming sword.

A smile disturbed their visages sedate,
As passion's prince, the conqueror of hate,
The gentle, wayward tyrant of the heart,
Who bears in tragedy the leading part,
Was pictured as a child in thought and size,
Unlike his princely namesake in the skies,
Whom all revere,

 accustomed still to see,

With Faith and Hope, the greatest of the three.

Now came a pleasing change from gorgeous light,
To softer radiance 'twixt day and night;
When all the hosts of heaven disperse, to muse,
And contemplate amid the falling dews
The wonders of his power,

 whose brief command

Marshals the planets in divisions grand.

A Sabbath stillness reigns, save far away,
The temple choir, that singeth night and day,
Makes silence eloquent; as organ notes
Soft through the pillared aisles and arches floats,
Of dim cathedral;

 speaking to the soul

With voice more potent than its heavier roll.

Thither they wended, passing many a league
Of city and champaigne, without fatigue.
Now borne by light-oared barge, or from the crest
Of lofty height, as eagle from his nest
Floats down upon the wind, they passed beneath
That canopy of cloud, whose mists enwreath

The temple courts,
 and shroud a wide area,
Where worlds on worlds might pass and disappear.

A cloudy wreath of many colors rings
The ante-chamber of the King of Kings;
And misty prisms, tremulously bright,
Fresco the vault, "no column lifts its height,"
Or props the boundless visionary sky,
That shifts alternate from remote to nigh;
Compressing now the rapturous notes that rise
From voice and harp, or now discursive dies;
As shifting winds

now bring sweet music near,
Or wildly sweep it from the listening ear.

Forgetful of the splendors gathered there,
(Divine perfections so pervade the air,)
The lowly child of earth

can scarce endure
The first approach to infinitely pure.

“Alas! alas! for what mine eyes have seen!
I and my people are unclean, unclean!”
The sorrowing soul exclaims

with long drawn sigh.
A still, small voice replies, "Thou shalt not die."

"A strange sensation steals," she whispered low,
"Through every nerve, as 'neath the cloud we go."

Oppressed with awful dread,
I greatly fear,
And yet my soul would dwell for ever here.

Where is the Saviour? How would guilty pride
Call on the rocks and hills to fall, and hide
Its very being? Where is Jesus now?

O let his name be written on my brow,
That all may know,
and every hand extend,
And every tongue give welcome to his friend."

“Peace,” said the angel, “Let thy terrors cease,
Yonder the ‘Son of Man,’ the ‘Prince of Peace,’
Awaits thy coming. See!” She looked, and lo!
Far as a steed from morn to eve might go
Up a wide avenue, with seraphs bright
On either side, a soft, suffused light
Hung round a Majesty, whose aspect high
Obscured its satellites, as stars too nigh
The full, round moon,

grow pale, and are forgot,
Lost in her beams as if their own were not.

And she who shrunk, bewildered and amazed,
From angel presences that round her blazed,
Forgot them all, and said,

“How can it be
That the high King of Glory died for me?”

How would men stand amazed if they could trace What none can tell, the fashion of his grace?"

And none may paint, forbid by God to mar
With feeble hand, the "Bright and Morning Star."

But while from angels man dismayed hath fled,
Or panic-stricken sunk to earth as dead,
They seemed but darkness now

by that Great One,
Quenched like the glow-worm by the midday sun.

Close by the Wonderful, so near they were,
They seemed but parts of him, and no less fair ;

That laid the Majesty of Heaven low,
Till gentle Mercy said :

“ 'Tis for my sake,”

And even then that dreadful hand did shake.

Three days, with whitened cheeks and lips comprest,
She watched the spot where sunk in death the Blest ;
And ne'er till then,

was Justice discomposed,

Or signs of fear the Lofty One disclosed.

But Justice, sternly high—as Mercy fair,
Oft turned to look with reverential air
On their transcendent sister, who once seen,
The haunting vision ever came between
The mind, and others ;

nor could time erase

From memory's gallery, that wondrous face.

On her broad front, where Greatness rear'd his throne,
And awful grandeur through its windows shone,
Had beauty found a home,

and come to dwell

In regal splendor that became her well.

As lightning flashes with incessant gleam
Across the bosom of the glassy stream ;
Flash following flash, with rapid, ceaseless flow,
That gilds the waters with a fiery glow ;
So the swift gleams

her working soul betrayed,

As light-winged fancy o'er her visage played.

Beneath her brows—half shaded by her locks,
As drooping foliage shades the massive rocks,
Were eyes in which Eternity

was glassed,

And 'Times, and Things, in quick transition passed.

That turning backward, worlds and systems scanned,
And, darting forward, worlds and systems planned.

That saw each planet in its circle roll,
Counted its atoms, and surveyed the whole.

Marked where the

tiny sparrow sunk in death,
And huge Leviathan gave up his breath.

All places and events did seem to come
As legions trained, who hear the warning drum ;
So, Times and Things,

with hasty ardor flew,
To pass before those eyes, in grand review.
Nor fitful seemed their light, like passion's glance,
That burns awhile then sinks in weary trance :
But like the steed,

whose power must be repressed,
Her mighty energy, was restless rest.

With God, while yet Eternity was young,
Over the depths her tireless pinions hung—
Or stooping low,

or rising o'er the steep,
As hangs the stormy petrel o'er the deep.

She heard that voice, to Chaos' ears addressed,
That called the germs of worlds from their long rest,
And heard their plaints,

as answering the Most High,
From out their swaddling-bands, the infants cry.

When on the void the Lord his compass set,
To mark the bounds where each division met
In his projected schemes of worlds, and said :
" Betwixt these lines, this shining host shall tread."

And round that family, set watch and ward,
 To mark the limits of their outmost guard :
 Then set the compass to each planet's source,
 And traced the circle of its future course :
 Wisdom was there,

rejoicing in his sight

As one brought up with Him, and his delight.

And when he called from out the womb of Night
 The Infant Earth, and said, " Let there be light ;"
 And when from out his hand—as from a cup
 He poured the sea, and shut its waters up
 With bars and doors, and clothed it with his cloud,
 And scared its fretfulness with thunders loud,
 And weighed in balances, the viewless air,
 And called the fountains forth ; the Child was there,
 Still near to him,

the "Ancient One of Days,"

To search perfection out, and learn his ways.

Myriads of shells, their colors undefined,
 With forms of elegance and strength combined ;
 And myriad flowers,

of rich and varied hue,

On shore and field, her teeming fancy threw.

She scooped the gulf where mountain torrent flows,
 And mixt the life blood, of the crimson rose.

She stood majestic, and reaching forth,
 Lit up the spacious chambers of the North ;
 Then stooping lowly

to the violet meek,

Touched her light pencil to its little cheek.

The sea-bird learned from her to poise his wing,
 The little tenant of the grove to sing ;

She taught with patient care, the insect throng
To tone and modulate their evening song ;
Then struck the key note

to those orbs that shine,

“The hand that made us, is a hand divine.”

Where'er she stood, upon the sea or land,
Strange forms of beauty sprung beneath her hand ;
And down below, amid the fountains cold.
(The place of sapphires, and the dust of gold)
She passed—

and jewels glittered in the gloom,

Like lover's watch-light shining in the tomb.

All shapes and hues that please, and ev'ry sound
That chains the ear, she threw profusely round
In winds and streams,

by hill, and plain, and glen,

For her delights were with the sons of men.

Alike the ages chronicled, and flown,
And ages yet to come, are all her own.

The ancient years advances and retires,
And time is born, and hoary Time expires
(A meteor's flash to her,

who far and fast

Explores the future ages as the past.)

O'er that mysterious deep, whose breadth and length,
No barriers mark, or curbs its restless strength,
Toward which all fleets spread their white sails in vain ;
From whence the past fell slow like drops of rain,
She ranges unconfined,

and everywhere

Finds her old home, and breathes her native air.
Familiar with each distant time and place ;

Her hour "eternity"—her chamber "space."

There wisdom waited

as a little child

By Jesus' side, delighted when he smiled.

While Mary, Wisdom wonderingly beheld,
Wild strains of music from the temple swelled,
Where unrevealed Divinity abides,
And wrapt in mystery the Father hides
His pomp ineffable,

and there they came,

While thousands heralded the Saviour's name.

"Lift up your heads ye everlasting gates,
The King of Glory comes" resounded loud,
And up in massive folds, the sable cloud-
Rising—

revealed what never can be shown
Save this, "Here dwells the Infinite unknown."

Bright gleams and flashes lit the chamber vast,
As if from diamonds fires were glancing fast,
And myriad meteors

a moment fly,

That brief as lightning's flash, are born and die.

Remote and indistinct; midst fiery glow,
And sable shade, a mountain, white as snow
Looms from a sea of life, that heaves and raves,
That lashed by passion, tosses high its waves
Around the throne's circumference: harp and song
In mighty concert storms of praise prolong:
And winds,

deep laden with their incense brings
From far-off choirs, their tuneful offerings.

High, lifted up, upon the great white throne,
Midst regal multitudes, but yet alone ;
An all-pervading, and refulgent light,
Compared to which the sun is rayless night ;
Itself the exhaustless source of stars and suns,
Dispensing glory as the fountain runs,
Projecteth far abroad

its living streams

And darts through space its living rills and streams.

“ What form is that which I can scarce discern ?
Night is on fire, and Darkness' curtains burn
Around a Majesty.” As thus she spoke,
Increasing radiance her slumbers broke,
And lo, 'twas all a dream, but since that hour,
The seen and tangible, hath little power
To move and agitate, and now she's grey,
Ofttimes in musing mood, she looks that way,
And will look thither till her dying day.





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